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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Settle power tussle: CM to top brass

Sources say Rahul & Sonia will hold talks with Siddaramaiah, DKS soon

BENGALURU, 25 NOV

As the power tussle within the ruling Congress in Karnataka refuses to die down, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday said that the party high command should ultimately take the decision to put a full stop to this confusion.

The power struggle between Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has intensified following the halfway mark of the government's five-year term on 20 November, alongside reports of a "power-sharing" agreement reached in 2023. Sources said the high command is expected to summon both leaders to New Delhi in the coming days to arrive at an amicable settlement before the winter session of Parliament.

The power struggle between Siddaramaiah and DK Shivakumar intensified following the halfway mark of the governmen ***PHOTO PTI***

Congress leaders, including Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and former party chief Sonia Gandhi, are likely to hold talks with Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar on 28 or 29 November to contain damage to the party and the government. Responding to reports of legislators backing Shivakumar visiting Delhi, Siddaramaiah said, "Let them go, MLAs have freedom. Ultimately, to put a full stop to this confusion, the high command has to take the decision." Six Congress legislators supportive of Shivakumar travelled to Delhi on 23 November, with more expected to join them.

> **I don't know. I have not asked to make me the CM. It is a secret deal between five and six of us. I don't want to speak publicly on this**
>
> —DK Shivakumar, Deputy CM

Regarding a potential Cabinet reshuffle, Siddaramaiah indicated it would only happen at the high command's direction and said he has no immediate plans to meet Rahul Gandhi. Observers note that the high command's forthcoming decisions will determine whether Siddaramaiah completes the full term or Shivakumar gains the premiership. *—PTI*

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PHOTO: FREEPIK

Cannot legislate or monitor every hate speech case: SC

NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

The Supreme Court on Tuesday made it clear that it is not inclined to legislate on or monitor every incident of hate speech occurring across the country, noting that adequate mechanisms already exist through police authorities, high courts and statutory measures.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta made the remarks while hearing an application alleging social and economic boycott calls targeting a particular community. The court initially asked the applicant to approach the jurisdictional high court, observing: "How can this Court continue to monitor all such instances all over the country? You approach the authorities. Let them take action; otherwise, go to the high court."

The applicant's counsel argued that the plea was filed as an extension of a pending writ petition on hate speech and that authorities had failed to act, despite the Supreme Court's earlier directions requiring police to take suo motu action and face contempt for non-compliance. He also claimed some public representatives were issuing boycott calls.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta responded that public interest must not be selective, stating that "severe hate speeches" occurred across all religions. He said he would provide the applicant with instances involving other communities to ensure the issue was addressed comprehensively. "No one can indulge in hate speech — that is my stand. But a public-spirited person cannot be selective," he added.

The bench reiterated that remedies existed under the law and advised the applicant to seek relief before the concerned high court. *—PTI*

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PHOTO: PTI

Ram Mandir officially complete, PM hoists flag

AYODHYA, 25 NOV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday hoisted the saffron Dharma Dhwaj atop the Ram temple in Ayodhya, marking its formal completion, and said the "wounds and pain of centuries" were healing as a 500-year-old resolve had finally been fulfilled. The prime minister, who performed the flag hoisting in the presence of RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, also used the occasion to outline the roadmap for a developed India by 2047 and said the country must break free from the British-era legacy of "slave mentality". *—PTI*

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China denies harassing Indian woman at airport

BEIJING, 25 NOV

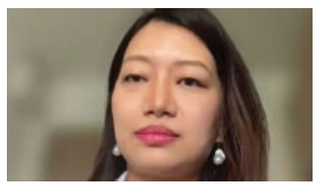
- India lodged a strong demarche with China and reinforced that Arunachal Pradesh is "indisputably" Indian territory.

China has rejected claims that an Indian woman from Arunachal Pradesh was harassed at Shanghai airport, asserting that immigration officials acted according to legal protocols. Pema Wangjom Thongdok, a UK-based Indian citizen travelling from London to Japan on 21 November, alleged her three-hour layover turned into a distressing episode when her passport was deemed "invalid" because it stated Arunachal Pradesh as her birthplace.

In response to her claims, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning stated that Thongdok was not subjected to compulsory measures, detention, or harassment as alleged. "The entire time, China's border inspection authorities carried out check procedures in accordance with laws and regulations," Mao affirmed, adding that the law enforcement was impartial and that Thongdok's rights were fully protected. She also noted that the airline provided resting facilities and meals during the incident.

Mao reiterated China's position on Arunachal Pradesh, claiming the region, referred to as Zangnan or South Tibet, is part of China. "Zangnan is China's territory, and China does not recognise the so-called Arunachal Pradesh illegally established by India," she stated.

In response to the incident, India lodged a strong demarche with China and reinforced that Arunachal Pradesh is "indisputably" Indian territory. Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu expressed his "deep shock," calling the incident a "violation of international norms and an affront to the dignity of Indian citizens." Thongdok was ultimately assisted by the Indian consulate in Shanghai after reaching them through a friend. *—PTI*



1983 Assam riots including Nellie massacre non-communal: Report

GUWAHATI, 25 NOV

The Tewary Commission report on the 1983 Assam disturbances, tabled in the Assembly on Tuesday, concludes that the large-scale violence, including the Nellie massacre, had "no communal colour", though the Assamese fear of being "overwhelmed numerically" was "not imaginary".

The commission, formed in July 1983 and headed by retired IAS officer TP Tewary, found the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and Asom Gana Sangram Parishad (AGSP) "primarily responsible" for launching the Assam Agitation and its consequences. The six-year anti-influx movement had intensified during the 1983 assembly elections, which saw low voter turnout and brought the Congress to power after President's Rule.The Tewary report states that the decision to hold elections amidst the disturbances alone "cannot be blamed for the outbreak of the violence of 1983".

"The evidence produced before the commission clearly brings out that the issues of foreigners, language, etc have been agitating the minds of the people for the last several decades, exploding into violence on several previous occasions," it states.

Copies of the report, submitted in 1984, were circulated to MLAs on Tuesday, as sufficient copies were not available when it was first tabled in 1987 by the AGP government, the political offshoot of AGSP.

The panel examined 257 witnesses, including 106 officials, and documented 8,019 incidents. A total of 2,072 people died in group clashes, 235 in police firing, and over 2.26 lakh were rendered homeless, with nearly 2.48 lakh taking shelter in relief camps.

The report states that violence spiralled beyond the organisers' control, with "overwhelming evidence" of pre-planned destruction and coercion. It held that giving the events a communal label was "entirely unwarranted", noting that all communities suffered. It also highlighted concerns over land occupation by migrants and recommended restrictions on land transfer to non-Assamese, referencing protections similar to those in Kashmir. *—PTI*

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ZUBEEN'S DEATH IS MURDER: ASSAM CM IN ASSEMBLY

GUWAHATI, 26 NOV

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has declared the death of popular singer Zubeen Garg, which occurred while swimming in Singapore, a "plain and simple murder". Addressing the assembly during an adjournment motion prompted by the opposition, Sarma stated, "After preliminary probe, the Assam Police was sure that it was not a case of culpable homicide."

In light of this revelation, the special investigation team (SIT) has added murder charges to the ongoing inquiry. *—PTI*

BAN THE BOTTLE

Women from several districts protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Tuesday, demanding a State-wide liquor ban ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

FOR JUST RS 5,000

Book Namo Bharat trains for shoots, parties now

NEW DELHI,25 NOV

- Bookings begin at Rs 5,000 per hour and include an additional 30 minutes for preparation and wrap-up.

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation has launched a first-of-its-kind initiative allowing Namo Bharat trains and stations on the Delhi–Meerut corridor to be hired for personal events, including birthday celebrations, pre-wedding photoshoots and milestone occasions.

Under the new policy, individuals, event planners, photographers and media companies can book static coaches, running trains, or a mock-up coach at Duhai Depot for controlled shoots. The mock-up option enables lighting and set-up work without affecting passenger operations.

Bookings begin at Rs 5,000 per hour and include an additional 30 minutes for preparation and wrap-up. Events are permitted between 6am and 11pm. Simple decorations are allowed, but nothing that could damage interiors or hinder services. NCRTC staff and security personnel will oversee all events to ensure safety and smooth conduct.

PHOTO: X

Alongside personal celebrations, the NCRTC has rolled out a premises-hiring policy for film shoots, advertisements, documentaries and digital content at competitive rates.

Stations such as Anand Vihar, Ghaziabad, Sahibabad, Duhai and Meerut South are expected to become popular for their clean design, ample lighting and open spaces, offering an unconventional alternative to traditional venuest. *—Agencies*

Volcanic ash from Ethiopia disrupts flights in India

NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

Ash clouds from a volcanic eruption in Ethiopia drifted over parts of India on Tuesday, disrupting flight operations, according to government agencies.

Despite concerns that the Ethiopian ash cloud could worsen pollution, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) confirmed the phenomenon was confined to upper atmospheric levels.

Delhi's air quality remained in the 'very poor' category for the 12th consecutive day, with the city's overall AQI settling at 353.

"It is affecting flight operations but has no impact on air quality or weather," said IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, adding that the ash would move away from Indian skies by 7.30 pm.

Volcanic ash was detected over Gujarat, Delhi-NCR, Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana. The plume originated from Ethiopia's Hayli Gubbi volcano, which erupted on Sunday, sending ash up to 14 km (45,000 ft). High winds carried the plume across the Red Sea, Yemen, Oman and into western and northern India.

PHOTO: X

The civil aviation ministry said several flights were delayed or cancelled. Air India grounded 13 flights for safety checks on aircraft that passed through affected zones.

The IMD monitored satellite imagery and advised aircraft to avoid impacted airspace. Continuous monitoring was used for flight planning, route changes and fuel adjustments. *—PTI*

India nearing $450M BrahMos export deals

NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

India is close to finalising defence export agreements worth around USD 450 million for the sale of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, in what is set to be a major boost to the Centre's export ambitions. The missiles, jointly developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation and Russia, have attracted interest from several friendly foreign nations impressed by their performance during Operation Sindoor, where they struck multiple Pakistani air bases with high precision.

Defence sources said the deals are in their "final stages" and are likely to be followed by further orders, given significant global interest. The BrahMos system drew considerable attention at the recent Dubai Air Show. *—ANI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

'Young doctors must uphold ethics and serve society'

BIDAR, 25 NOV

Young doctors completing their postgraduate studies must uphold ethical values and serve society with responsibility, Medical Education Minister Sharanprakash Patil said on Tuesday. Speaking at "Sankalpa", the postgraduate convocation of Bengaluru Medical College and Research Institute, he told graduates that learning does not end with a degree and urged them to continuously update their skills amid rapid medical advancements in India and abroad. Calling BMCRI a prestigious institution offering quality education at minimal cost, he urged students to "give back to society" through dedicated public service.

—Salar News

Senior IAS officer Bilagi dies in road accident

BENGALURU, 25 NOV

A senior IAS officer, Mahantesh Bilagi, along with two of his family members, died in a major road accident near Gounahalli in Jewargi taluk, Kalaburagi district, on Monday. Bilagi, who was serving as Managing Director of Karnataka State Minerals Corporation Limited and previously held the post of Managing Director at Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited, was travelling from Vijayapura to Kalaburagi in an Innova car to attend a relative's wedding. Police said the vehicle suddenly lost control, leading to a "self-accident." Bilagi suffered severe injuries and was rushed to a private hospital in Kalaburagi, where he later succumbed. His brothers, Iranna Sirasangi, 62, and Shankar Plagi, 50, also died in the crash. Visuals from the scene showed the car badly damaged, with huge dents and a shattered windshield. Authorities have registered a case, and investigations are ongoing to determine the exact cause of the accident.

—Salar News

CM change a secret deal, says Shivakumar

Leadership change issue can't be discussed publicly, says Kharge

KANAKAPURA/NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

Karnataka's power tussle resurfaced on Tuesday as Deputy Chief Minister and State Congress President DK Shivakumar described the reported chief ministerial change as a "secret deal" involving "five or six" people in the party, insisting he would not discuss the matter in public.

Shivakumar, speaking to reporters in his home constituency Kanakapura, said he did not want to "embarrass or weaken" the party. "I have not asked to be made CM. It is a secret deal between five and six of us. I believe in my conscience," he said, adding that the Congress and its workers came before individual ambitions.

Speculation over leadership change has intensified after the Congress government Siddaramaiah, praising him as a senior leader and "an asset", and noted that the CM had already announced he would present the next Budget. "We should all work together with the target of 2028 and 2029," he said.

Kharge declined to comment on any possible meetings with Rahul Gandhi. He had earlier travelled to the airport with Shivakumar **PHOTO: PTI**

Meanwhile, in Delhi, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the issue of leadership change in Karnataka was not for public discussion. "This is not a subject to be discussed here and media) have written things."

that too in public," he said, adding that he had come solely to attend Constitution Day events and subsequent review meetings.

Kharge declined to comment on any possible meetings with Rahul Gandhi, stating only that discussions, if any, would be internal. He had earlier travelled to the airport with Shivakumar.

Within the Karnataka Congress, Siddaramaiah is reportedly pushing for a Cabinet reshuffle. Party insiders say approval for such a reshuffle from the high command would signal that Siddaramaiah would complete his full term — a move that could effectively close the door on any mid-term transition to Shivakumar.

Shivakumar, for his part, said prayers offered by supporters today were less important than those offered when he was in jail. *—PTI*

Resolve power tussle before Assembly session: BJP

BENGALURU, 25 NOV

BJP President BY Vijayendra on Tuesday urged the ruling Congress to resolve its leadership tussle before the winter session of the legislature begins in Belagavi on 8 December, saying the state "does not want an acting or outgoing Chief Minister".

Vijayendra warned that continued infighting would prevent the government from addressing key issues affecting people, particularly in north Karnataka. If the Congress cannot settle the matter before the session, he said, it should consider postponing it.

Accusing the government of failing to respond to the concerns of sugarcane and maize farmers, he said the administration was unprepared to tackle urgent agrarian issues. Maize growers in Davangere, Belagavi, Shivamogga, Ballari, Vijayapura, Haveri, Chitradurga and Tumakuru districts were being subjected to "injustice" due to government inaction, he alleged.

Vijayendra said the BJP would launch statewide protests on 27–28 November in all Assembly constituencies, followed by demonstrations in district centres on 1–2 December.

A mega protest was organised in Davangere on Tuesday to press the government to address the demands of sugarcane, maize and paddy farmers, including a support price of Rs 3,000 per quintal and the opening of procurement centres. *—PTI*

Lokayukta recovers cash, gold in Mysuru

MYSURU, 25 NOV

In a significant operation conducted on Tuesday, Lokayukta officials uncovered property deeds worth crores, gold ornaments, and large sums of cash during a raid at the residence of Ramaswamy C, a Revenue Inspector at Hootgalli Municipality in Mysuru.

This raid was part of a broader investigation spanning several government officials across the State, triggered by complaints filed by the KLA district units under the SIR process. These officials are implicated in various departments, including municipal administration, revenue, veterinary services, education, and public works.

The list of those under scrutiny includes: Puttaswamy C, CAO of Town Municipality in Mandya; Prem Singh, Chief Engineer of Upper Krishna Project, Bidar; Ramaswamy C himself; Subash Chandra, an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Karnataka University, Dharwad; Sathish, Senior Veterinary Examiner at Primary Veterinary Clinic, Huilgol, Dharwad; Shekhappa, Executive Engineer, Office of the Project Director in Haveri, Davangere; Kumarswamy P, Office Superintendent at RTO, Electronic City in Bengaluru; Lakshmipathi CN, FDA at SIMS Medical College, Agriculture Sales Depot, APMC, Shimoga; Prabhu J, Assistant Director, DVG, Davangere; and Girish D M, Assistant Executive Engineer, PWD, Madikeri.

Additionally, the Lokayukta officials executed a raid at the residence and office of Professor Subhaschandra Natikar at Karnataka University, Dharwad. The operation, led by Lokayukta SP Siddalingappa, targeted Natikar's home in Shetter Colony and his properties in Talikoti, Koppal district, following allegations regarding inappropriate asset possession.

This latest operation follows prior raids conducted in July, when the Karnataka Lokayukta targeted five officials in connection with alleged disproportionate assets. *—ANI*

Lokayukta raids RTO official in City

BENGALURU, 25 NOV

Lokayukta officers carried out raids at seven locations linked to Electronic City RTO Office Superintendent Kumarswamy P, registering Crime No. 57/2025 under the Prevention of Corruption Act. The searches uncovered immovable assets worth Rs 3.34 crore, including seven sites, four houses and agricultural land. Movable assets worth Rs 92 lakh were also seized, comprising Rs 22 lakh in cash, jewellery worth Rs 32 lakh, vehicles worth Rs 22 lakh and other items. Investigators assessed Rs 2.86 crore as disproportionate assets, amounting to 204 per cent over his known income. Officers also photographed the search without the official present. *—Salar News*

HISTORIC TRIUMPH

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah felicitates the Women's Blind Cricket team on their first-ever World Cup victory at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Tuesday **PHOTO: SALAR**

Aim for the moon, Subhanshu tells students

Gaganyatri Shubhanshu Shukla interacts with students at Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium in Bengaluru on Tuesday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

BENGALURU, 25 NOV

Indian astronaut and Group Captain Subhanshu Shukla, part of the Gaganyaan mission, encouraged students to dream big and aspire to establish a space station and set foot on the moon. Speaking during an event in the City, he remarked, "I am curious to see whether it will be a man or a woman from the country to step on the lunar surface. You will have to compete with me."

Highlighting India's advancements in human spaceflight, Shukla explained, "India is on its own path of executing human space missions... Mission Gaganyaan clearly lays down that the country will send humans to space and bring them back." The Gaganyaan programme marks India's first human spaceflight initiative.

Shukla further elaborated on future aspirations, stating, "We will also have our own space station, Bharatiya Antariksh Station, which is being built right now... and eventually, an Indian landing on the Moon by 2040." He expressed confidence that at least one student present could become the first Indian on the lunar surface, saying, "You will have to compete with me to go to the moon."

Emphasising the promising future of India's space sector, he stated, "We are launching from our own soil, in our own capsule... I think it's a magnificent time to be here." *—PTI*

PREP IN FULL BLOOM

Workers ready Cubbon Park for the four-day flower show, set to open on 27 November 2025 in Bengaluru **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

7, including two cops, arrested for robbing jewellery artisan

DAVANAGERE, 25 NOV

Police have arrested seven individuals, including two police sub-inspectors, on charges of robbing a jewellery artisan of gold. The arrested officers, identified as Malappa Chippalakatte and Praveen Kumar, are accused of threatening the victim, Vishwanath Arakasali, a jewellery artisan from Karwar.

Davanagere Superintendent of Police, Uma Prashanth, stated, "We arrested both officers yesterday on charges of robbing a person of gold." Arakasali, who had travelled to Davangere to collect a 76gm gold bar and a 2.15gm ring from merchants, reported being intercepted by the officers upon his return.

Around 12.30am, he arrived at the bus stand from Hubballi when the sub-inspectors allegedly grabbed him, showed their police identity cards, and took him to a police jeep parked nearby. They threatened him, stating that he would not be released unless he handed over the gold. While en route to Bengaluru, they reportedly snatched the gold items before dropping him back at the bus stand.

Following the incident, Arakasali lodged a complaint, leading to the arrest of the sub-inspectors and two accomplices.

Police have seized the vehicle and a fake gun used in the crime. This incident follows recent arrests of police personnel involved in separate criminal activities in the region. *—PTI*

3-year-old drifts into water tank, rescued

KOLAR, 25 NOV

A three-year-old girl trapped in a water tank filled with bushes was safely rescued after a 2-hour operation by the Kolar Rural Police.

According to information received, the child's family had come from Chitradurga to Chunchadenahalli and were staying in a hut near the tank, where her parents had come for fish catching. The girl was playing near the water body when she spotted a coracle. She climbed into it and unintentionally drifted nearly 500 metres into the tank before the coracle became stuck in the bushes. Her mother, who later came searching for her, saw the child stranded in the middle of the tank and raised an alarm.

The villagers alerted the Kolar Rural police Inspector K Kantharaju who rushed to the spot immediately. After assessing the situation Kantharaju summoned an expert swimmer Nizamuddin of Sugatur and entrusted him with the task of rescuing the girl.

The 27-year-old Nizamuddin swam went into the tank and reached the coracle, but was unable to remove it from where it had got entangled into the bushes. Meanwhile, Nagappa Gowdappa Nandi, a constable attached to Kolar Emergency Services jumped into the tank and untangleD the coracle with the help of Nizamuddin and rescued the girl. *—Salar News*

Nagappa Gowdappa Nandi, a constable jumped into the tank and managed to rescue the child **PHOTO: SALAR**

DUE TO MULTIPLE FIBROIDS

4kg uterus removed after 8 yrs of pain

BENGALURU, 25 NOV

In a remarkable advancement for women's healthcare, a hospital in the City has successfully treated a 45-year-old woman who endured nearly eight years of severe abdominal pain, heavy menstrual bleeding, and severe anaemia. The patient's uterus had grown to the size of a six-month pregnancy, weighing 4kg due to multiple fibroids and adenomyosis. An umbilical hernia further complicated her condition.

The patient often found herself bedridden for five days each month due to excessive bleeding. After a thorough evaluation by Sabiha Anjum Shaik, Senior Consultant in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, a complex dual robotic surgery was planned to address both the enlarged uterus and hernia simultaneously.

"This patient had endured years of pain and limitations," Shaik remarked. "Being able to restore her quality of life is truly rewarding. Robotic surgery helped us treat both conditions safely and precisely in one procedure." Anil Krishna, Chairman and Managing Director of the hospital, noted, "This case demonstrates what modern healthcare can achieve when clinical expertise and cutting-edge technology work together. Robotic surgery is redefining outcomes for complex gynaecological and abdominal conditions." *—ANI*

The patient's uterus had grown to the size of a six-month pregnancy, weighing 4kg due to multiple fibroids and adenomyosis **PHOTO: AI**

Modi unveils memorial in Kurukshetra

KURUKSHETRA, 25 NOV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday inaugurated the newly built 'Panchjanya' memorial in Kurukshetra, dedicated to the sacred conch of Lord Krishna. He also visited the Mahabharata Anubhav Kendra, an immersive centre showcasing key episodes from the epic through advanced installations. Developed under the Centre's Swadesh Darshan scheme, the Rs 200-crore complex presents the Mahabharata's philosophy, history and cultural legacy using modern technology. The memorial, constructed within the complex, honours Krishna's conch, symbolising righteousness and truth. The structure weighs about 5 to 5.5 tonnes and stands 4 to 5 metres tall. Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini was present. Earlier, Modi was in Ayodhya. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Pune land deal: Parth's firm seeks time over probe

PUNE, 25 NOV

A firm linked to Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar's son, Parth Pawar, has sought 15 additional days to reply to a notice directing it to pay Rs 21 crore in stamp duty for a Pune land deal. Amadea Enterprises LLP, where Parth is the majority partner, submitted the request to the Inspector General of Registration (IGR) on Monday. According to officials, lawyers representing the firm and partner Digvijay Patil filed the extension plea, which has been accepted for consideration by senior authorities. The Rs 300-crore sale of a 40-acre plot in Mundhwa drew scrutiny after it emerged the land belonged to the government and the firm received a stamp duty waiver. Patil, a power-of-attorney holder was indicted, though Parth was not named in the FIR. *—PTI*

Woman hit by Ajit Pawar's convoy vehicle dies

BEED, 25 NOV

A woman who, along with her husband and two daughters, was injured after a vehicle in the convoy of Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar rammed into their motorcycle in Beed district, died on Monday, police said. The accident occurred on Telgaon-Dharur Road in Dharur tehsil on 22 November, they said. Deputy CM Pawar was travelling from Partur in Jalna district to Ausa in Latur district when a fire brigade vehicle in his convoy hit a motorcycle on which the couple and their two daughters were going, as per the police. Vishnu Sude, 35, his wife Kusum, 30 and their two daughters - aged 6 and 9 - sustained injuries, an official of Dharur police station said. *—PTI*

28 Naxals surrender in Chhatisgarh's Narayanpur

NARAYANPUR, 25 NOV

Twenty-eight Naxalites, including 22 with a combined reward of Rs 89 lakh, surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur, officials said. The cadres approached senior police officials under the state government's 'Niyad Nellanar' scheme, new surrender policy, and "Poona Margham" social reintegration initiative. "The rehabilitation of 28 Maoist cadres indicates the end of violent, anti-people Maoist ideology is near. People are trusting Poona Margham and choosing peace and dignity," police said. This year, 287 Maoist cadres have quit violence in Narayanpur. Over 23 months, around 2,200 Naxalites have surrendered. Police believe remaining, including politburo member Devji and central committee members Ramdar and Pappa Rao, are likely to renounce violence and join the mainstream. *—PTI*

Modi hoists saffron flag at Ayodhya's Ram temple

He says centuries-old wounds are healing & finding closure

AYODHYA, 25 NOV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the "wounds and pain" of centuries were finally healing as the 500-year-old resolve to build the Ram temple reached formal completion. Modi's remarks came after he ceremonially hoisted a saffron flag atop the shrine's 161-foot spire, marking the official completion of the temple complex nearly six years after the Supreme Court's 2019 verdict.

Modi was joined by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat, Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The 22 ft × 11 ft saffron flag, made of parachute-grade cloth, bears symbols of the Sun, Om and the Kovidara tree. The Ram Lalla idol is located in the sanctum sanctorum on the ground floor, accessed via 32 steps from the eastern Singh Dwar.

Addressing the gathering, Modi urged the nation to "break free from the mentality of slavery" and shed long-held inferiority complexes inherited from the colonial era. He said India must dedicate the next decade to reversing the lingering impact of Thomas Macaulay's 1835 English Education Act, which sought to create an Indian elite with a Western mindset. Democracy, Modi said, was "in India's DNA", not an import.

He called the moment "unique" and "divine", saying the flag would stand as a symbol of the triumph of truth. Ayodhya, decorated for Vivah Panchami, hosted large cultural performances as crowds lined Modi's roadshow route, showering flower petals while 'Ram Dhun' played across the city.

The flag-hoisting ceremony saw representatives of tribals, forest-dwelling communities from Sonbhadra and the son of a litigant in the Babri case as special guests.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat during the Dhwajarohan ceremony at the Ram Temple, in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

> **Their souls (who sacrificed life for Ram Temple) must have found peace today... Those who worked in the background everyday also dreamt of Ram Mandir, now today that the ritualistic completion is over; the flag of 'Ram Rajya' has been hoisted** -Mohan Bhagwat, RSS chief

Temple construction began after the Supreme Court's November 2019 ruling and the creation of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust. The consecration of the idol was held on 22 January 2022, and the Ram Darbar opened to devotees in June 2025.

Modi urged citizens to "awaken the Ram within" as India works toward becoming a developed nation by 2047.

Samajwadi Party MP Awadhesh Prasad alleged he was not invited due to his Dalit identity, a charge the Bharatiya Janata Party denied.

Ayodhya, officials said, is emerging as a model blend of "antiquity and modernity" as rituals continue atop the newly completed temple. *—PTI*

18th Bihar Assembly inaugural session set for 1 Dec

PATNA, 25 NOV

The inaugural session of the 18th Bihar Assembly will begin on 1 December, when all newly elected members will take their oath of office.

The ceremony will be administered by JD(U) leader Narendra Narayan Yadav, appointed pro-tem Speaker by Governor Arif Mohammad Khan. On the second day, the Assembly will elect its new Speaker, with the BJP, which holds 89 seats, expected to nominate its candidate. Former minister Prem Kumar, who won the Gaya Town seat for a record eighth consecutive term, is considered the leading contender.

On 3 December, the Governor will deliver a joint address to both Houses, followed by the tabling of the second supplementary budget. The motion of thanks will be debated on 4 December, and the session will conclude the following day with deliberations on supplementary budget and passage of the appropriation bill.

Meanwhile, the newly formed Bihar Cabinet has pledged to create one crore jobs over five years. Plans include a defense corridor, semiconductor park, global capacity centers, and a mega tech city, alongside an AI Mission, greenfield townships in 11 cities, and the revival of nine sugar mills with 25 new ones to be established. *—PTI*

Assam Assembly tables bill on prohibition of polygamy

GUWAHATI, 25 NOV

In a significant day for the Assam Assembly, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma introduced the Assam Prohibition of Polygamy Bill, 2025, amidst a walkout by Opposition parties. The bill, aimed at banning polygamy, was presented on the first day of the Winter Session.

MEHTA COMMISSION

Additionally, Sarma laid before the Assembly the Mehta Commission's report on the 1983 election violence, marking another chapter in Assam's turbulent history. The report addresses the large-scale violence amidst the Assam Agitation, which was triggered by concerns over illegal infiltration.

OPPN MLAS SUSPENDED

In a separate development, two opposition MLAs, Nurul Huda and Sherman Ali Ahmed, were suspended for the remainder of the session following mistreatment of Deputy Speaker Numal Momin. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said the Privilege Committee found Huda had attacked Momin, while Ahmed used unparliamentary language. *—PTI*

Andhra to get three new districts; total rises to 29

AMARAVATI, 25 NOV

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday approved the creation of three new districts—Markapuram, Madanapalle, and Polavaram—bringing the state's total from 26 to 29.

Following a review of a ministerial committee report at the secretariat, the chief minister approved the district changes along with the creation of five new revenue divisions.

"Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu approved the creation of three new districts. Markapuram and Madanapalle will be new districts, and Polavaram district will have Rampachodavaram as its headquarters," a press release said.

The new revenue divisions include Nakkapalli in Anakapalli district, Addanki in Prakasam, Piler in the new Madanapalle district, Banaganapalle in Nandyal, and Madakasira in Sri Sathya Sai district, it added. *—PTI*

India, Canada nears sealing of $2.8 billion uranium deal

TORONTO, 25 NOV

India and Canada are close to finalising a uranium export deal worth about US$ 2.8 billion, marking a major step in restoring bilateral ties.

The proposed 10-year agreement would see Canada's Cameco Corp supply uranium under a civil nuclear partnership.

Terms could still be adjusted before an official announcement.

India previously imported uranium from Cameco under

a 2015 contract worth US$ 350 million under the 2013 Canada–India Nuclear Cooperation Agreement, but the new deal is not a renewal.

India operates 25 nuclear reactors, with six more under construction, many based on Canadian CANDU-derived designs.

Future collaboration may include Canadian small modular reactors.

The talks follow Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney agreeing to restart trade negotiations during the G20 summit.

Relations, strained in 2023 after the killing of Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, have improved, with both countries targeting USD 50 billion trade by 2030. *—Agencies*

Sharad Pawar's grandnephew Yugendra Pawar PHOTO: PTI

Candidates forced to quit from local poll: NCP (SP)

PUNE, 25 NOV

NCP (Sharad Pawar faction) national working president Supriya Sule has written to Maharashtra State Election Commissioner Dinesh Waghmare, alleging that aspirants in the upcoming local body polls are being pressured to withdraw so that certain candidates can win unopposed. She described a "worrying trend" in which contenders are forced out of the race through "threat, pressure, and coercion".

Her letter follows Maharashtra BJP president Ravindra Chavan's recent claim that 100 councilors from the ruling party had already been elected unopposed in municipal councils and nagar panchayats. Opposition parties have accused the BJP of extending its dynastic politics to grassroots elections, alleging misuse of police machinery to secure victories for relatives of leaders.

Polling for 246 municipal councils and 42 nagar panchayats will be held on 2 December, while civic body polls are expected in January 2026. Sule urged authorities to protect democratic values, warning that threats "completely unacceptable". *—PTI*

'ENVIRONMENTAL TRAGEDY'

MP: Cong claims large-scale tree felling for Adani's coal project

NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

The Congress on Tuesday accused the Adani Group of committing "procedural short-circuiting" in Madhya Pradesh's Dhirauli to cut down forests for a coal mine and described the reported "large-scale tree felling" as an "environmental tragedy and a social and economic disaster" for the local Adivasis.

Though there was no immediate response to the allegations from the Adani Group or the Madhya Pradesh government, the state dispensation had rejected as "baseless" the allegations made by Congress earlier regarding the project.

Congress General Secretary in-charge Communications Jairam Ramesh said, "We had raised the issue of the procedural short-circuiting that Modani and Co. have committed in Dhirauli Madhya Pradesh to cut down forests for a coal mine. Reports have now emerged that large-scale tree felling has begun in the village under heavy police presence."

Jairam Ramesh PHOTO: PTI

"Local villagers have been barred from approaching the forest site and outsiders have been denied entry. The MP Adivasi Congress President Ramu Tekam has been arrested for raising the issue," Ramesh said.

"This is an environmental tragedy and a social and economic disaster for the local Adivasi tribes who are reliant on the forests for their livelihood," the former environment minister said.

In September, Ramesh had alleged that the Adani Group has begun cutting trees on government and forest land for its coal mine project in Dhirauli in "blatant violation" of the Forest Rights Act. *—PTI*

- Though there was no immediate response to the allegations from the Adani Group or the MP government, the state dispensation had rejected as "baseless" claims made by Congress.

HOLDS ANTI-SIR MARCH

Didi warns of voter delisting under CAA in Matua belt

BONGAON, 25 NOV

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee went on a three-kilometre march to Thakurnagar, directing her ire at the Election Commission (EC), declaring it a "BJP Commission" acting under "instructions from Delhi" and manipulating the electoral rolls through artificial intelligence.

Speaking at a rally has warned that voters in Matua-majority areas may face immediate delisting if they identify as foreigners under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA).

Banerjee highlighted the human cost of the SIR, claiming that 35-36 deaths, including suicides, have been linked to the panic surrounding the exercise. "Human lives are too precious," she implored, assuring the crowd that "not a single lawful voter would be struck off the rolls."

She expressed concern over the rushed nature of the SIR, questioning why the process was being conducted in two months ahead of the 2026 assembly polls. Addressing the challenges posed by the BJP, she challenged the rationale behind conducting the SIR in BJP-ruled states if the aim was to remove "illegal Bangladeshis".

Additionally, Banerjee has accused the BJP of "political sabotage" following the cancellation of her helicopter ride to Bongaon, which forced her to travel by road. Scheduled to arrive at 12.30pm, she was informed at 10am that the helicopter would not fly due to an expired licence. "But at 10 in the morning, the message came that the helicopter won't go!," she stated, alleging "political reasons" behind the cancellation. *—PTI*

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addresses a rally, at Bangaon in North 24 Parganas district, West Bengal PHOTO: PTI

EC calls TMC for meeting on 28 November

The Election Commission has called the Trinamool Congress for a meeting on Friday after the party sought time with the poll panel amid the ongoing Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in 12 states and Union territories, including West Bengal. In a letter to party chief Mamata Banerjee, the poll authority said on Monday that a Trinamool delegation comprising its authorised representative and four others can meet its top brass at 11am on Friday. *—PTI*

BLO protest rages outside CEO office in WB

A sit-in by booth-level officers (BLOs) demanding a meeting with West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Kumar Agarwal escalated overnight, as protesters cited "unmanageable workloads" during the SIR of electoral rolls. The BLO Adhikar Raksha Committee, which has camped since Monday, insisted Agarwal personally receive their charter of demands. Tensions rose when around 50 BJP activists confronted the BLOs, alleging TMC intimidation of EC officials. *—PTI*

'TN politics is Tamil exceptionalism, not regionalism'

CHENNAI, 25 NOV

In a television interview, Ravi argued that certain leaders insist Tamil is "distinct", fuelling resentment not only towards Hindi but also fellow Dravidian languages such as Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

He said politicians do not truly care for Tamil, noting a sharp decline in students studying in Tamil medium and a shift towards English.

Ravi criticised the government for giving "zero budget for research" into Tamil language and culture, claiming over 11 lakh palm-leaf manuscripts in state archives are "rotting" without preservation funds. He recalled tensions with the DMK government, including his walkout from the Assembly's first session in January because the national anthem was not played at the start.

Ravi said he was constitutionally obligated to protest the breach of protocol. *—PTI*

TN to operate special buses for 'Karthigai Deepam'

CHENNAI, 25 NOV

The Tamil Nadu State Express Transport Corporation (SETC) has announced the operation of special buses to facilitate devotees attending the Karthigai Deepam festival at the Sri Arunachaleshwar temple, commencing with the flag hoisting on 24 November. SETC Managing Director R Mohan stated the initiative aims to assist long-distance travellers in reaching the hill temple. Ultra-deluxe and air-conditioned buses will be available from Nagercoil, Tirunelveli, Tuticorin, Sengottai, Madurai, and Coimbatore on 2 and 3 December. An additional 160 buses will run from Chennai for the full moon festival on 3 and 4 December. Devotees are encouraged to book round trips via www.tnstc.in or the official app. For inquiries, contact various SETC regional offices.—*PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

T'puram to halt flights for two hours from 27 Nov to 3 Dec

T'PURAM, 25 NOV

Flight services at Thiruvananthapuram International Airport will be suspended for approximately two hours each day from 27 November to 3 December, according to the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport Ltd (TIAL). The suspension will take place from 4.00pm to 6.15pm due to a scheduled airspace closure for the Navy Operational Demonstration 2025 during this period. TIAL advised passengers travelling on those days to "check with their respective airlines regarding any revision in flight timings." Passengers are encouraged to remain informed of any updates as the airport manages the operational changes.—*PTI*

Kolkata college to protest Centre's autonomy curb

KOLKATA, 25 NOV

Students, researchers, faculty members and staff of the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Kolkata, are set to protest a draft bill they say threatens the institute's autonomy. ISI, an autonomous body under MoSPI and an Institute of National Importance under the 1959 Act, fears the Central government plans to repeal the law without consulting the ISI Society. Members say this endangers the institute's identity, shaped by Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis and its nation-building role in bodies like the NSSO. Uncertainty over Kolkata remaining the headquarters has added to alarm among concerned members. The ISI Society has sought withdrawal of the bill. A human chain and procession are planned for 28 November to intensify opposition.—*PTI*

Man attacked by father over luxury car dispute dies

T'PURAM, 25 NOV

A 28-year-old man, Hridvik, has died after sustaining severe head injuries inflicted by his father during a dispute over a luxury car request. The incident occurred on 9 October at their Vanchiyoor home in Kerala, where arguments escalated after Hridvik demanded a luxury car despite already having an expensive motorbike. Following a physical confrontation, the father struck his son with a metal rod. The police reports indicate that Hridvik struggled for life at the government medical college hospital before succumbing to the head injuries. The neighbours described him as an unemployed individual with a propensity for the expensive demands, potentially linked to prior drug issues. The father was arrested after the incident and remains in custody. —*PTI*

Govt taking us lightly: SC on custodial deaths

SC pulls up govt over missing CCTVs in CBI, ED, NIA offices

NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

The Supreme Court on Tuesday reprimanded the Centre for failing to comply with its directive to install CCTV cameras in the offices of agencies such as the CBI, ED, and NIA, asking whether the Union government was taking the apex court "very lightly."

The remarks came while hearing a suo motu case on the lack of functional CCTVs in police stations, prompted by reports of 11 custodial deaths in Rajasthan over eight months.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta observed, "Now this country will not tolerate this. This is a blot on the system. You can't have deaths in custody." Solicitor General Tushar Mehta assured the court that compliance affidavits would be filed within three weeks.

The bench noted only 11 states had submitted affidavits in the suo motu petition, with many states and Union territories, including the Union of India, yet to comply. Senior advocate Siddhartha Dave, assisting as amicus curiae, flagged that CCTVs had been installed in three central agencies, but others remained non-compliant. The court highlighted Madhya Pradesh's centralised monitoring as a positive example, noting the system could serve as a model for other states.

Referring to a December 2020 order, the bench reiterated that CCTVs should cover all entry, exit, lock-up, and corridor areas in police stations and probe agencies. It observed that budgetary allocations for central agencies had not been made, a lapse that hindered compliance. The court granted remaining states and UTs three weeks to file affidavits and directed principal secretaries or agency directors to appear if they fail. The matter is listed for 16 December. —*PTI*

Supreme Court's remarks came while hearing a suo motu case on the lack of functional CCTVs in police stations **PHOTO: PTI**

SC redirects sexual abuse pleas in ISKCON schools to child panel

NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked petitioners alleging sexual abuse in ISKCON-run schools to approach the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights with their complaints. A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and R Mahadevan said representations made to the child rights commissions in Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal should also be examined within a reasonable time. "We dispose of this petition by reserving liberty to make a fresh representation or reminder to NCPCR, UP SCPCR and WB SCPCR," the bench said. The court was hearing a plea by Rajneesh Kapur and others seeking a probe into alleged abuse, claiming internal records showed serious cases and ignored complaints. —*PTI*

PHOTO:AI

SC flays Christian soldier for refusing to enter gurudwara

NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

- A bench declined to interfere with the Delhi High Court ruling that found his behaviour incompatible with military discipline and unit cohesion

The Supreme Court on Tuesday upheld the dismissal of former Christian Army officer Samuel Kamalesan, calling his conduct "the grossest kind of indiscipline" after he allegedly refused to enter the sanctum of a regimental temple during mandatory activities.

A bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi declined to interfere with the Delhi High Court ruling that found his behaviour incompatible with military discipline and unit cohesion.

The court said an Army officer cannot adopt a "private understanding" of religious practice while in uniform, noting that the regiment also maintained a gurdwara and that a pastor had advised Kamalesan there was no violation of Christian faith in entering a multi-faith space.

Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan argued that Kamalesan's refusal stemmed from conscience and that he otherwise joined all regimental events. The Army said repeated counselling failed and his conduct undermined troop leadership. The court held dismissal appropriate. —*PTI*

Rs 2,500 crore cocaine kingpin held in Dubai, to be deported to India

NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

Dubai-based drug trafficker Pawan Thakur, accused of orchestrating one of India's biggest recent cocaine seizures, has been arrested and will soon be deported, officials said. Thakur is believed to have masterminded the smuggling of 82kg of high-grade cocaine, worth around Rs 2,500 crore, intercepted in Delhi in November 2024. Investigators say the consignment was routed through an Indian port, moved by lorry to the capital and stored in a warehouse for distribution.

He is also linked to a separate methamphetamine seizure worth Rs 282 crore recovered in Delhi this week. Officials describe him as a long-time hawala and money-laundering operator who began as an agent in Delhi's Kucha Mahajani market before expanding into large-scale narcotics trafficking. Authorities allege he channelled drug profits through an extensive hawala network using crypto transfers and shell companies across India, China, Singapore, Hong Kong and the UAE.

In September, the NCB issued an international Silver Notice to trace his assets and financial operations abroad. The ED is also probing laundering of over Rs 681 crore through falsified import-export documents, crypto exchanges and fabricated records. After multiple ignored summons, a Delhi court issued a non-bailable warrant. Thakur fled to Dubai, where he continued his network and bought luxury assets, including a villa in Dubai Hills. —*Agencies*

Siddhanth Kapoor probed in drug case

Mumbai, 25 Nov

Actor-director Siddhanth Kapoor appeared before Mumbai Police on Tuesday to record his statement in the Rs 252-crore mephedrone seizure case. Kapoor was questioned at the Anti-Narcotics Cell's Ghatkopar unit. The ANC has also summoned influencer Orhan Awatramani (Orry) for questioning on 26 November after their names emerged during the interrogation of Mohammed Salim Mohammed Suhail Shaikh, alias Lavish, a key accused. Police say Shaikh organised rave parties in India and abroad attended by film and fashion figures. Deported from Dubai last month, Shaikh was earlier arrested in the Sangli drug haul and is linked to trafficker Salim Dola. - PTI

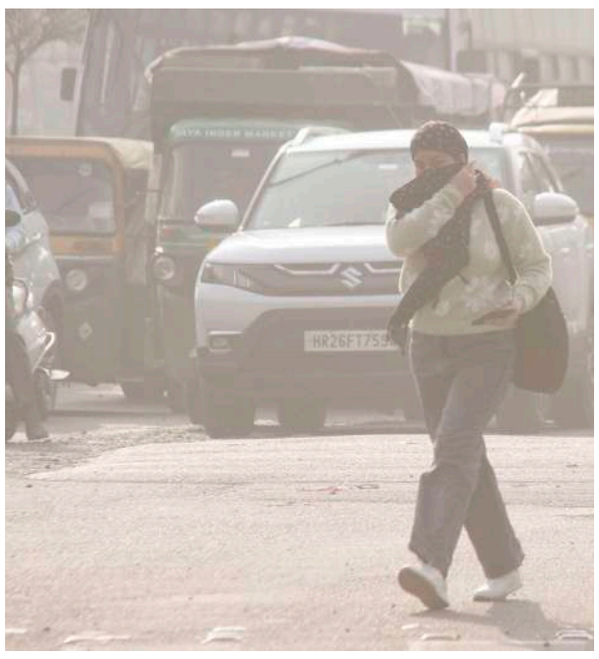
Delhi remains shrouded in dense smog

NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

Delhi remained shrouded in a dense haze on Tuesday as air quality stayed in the 'very poor' category, with officials monitoring whether ash from a volcanic eruption in Ethiopia could aggravate pollution levels.

Hayli Gubbi, a shield volcano in Ethiopia's Afar region, erupted on Sunday, sending an ash plume nearly 14 km into the atmosphere and drifting eastward across the Red Sea. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said the plume was moving towards China and would clear away from India by 7.30pm on Tuesday.

The concerns came as a new satellite-based analysis ranked Delhi as the most polluted among 33 states and Union territories, reporting an annual PM2.5 concentration of 101 micrograms per cubic metre, 2.5 times India's national standard and 20 times the WHO guideline.



A woman crosses a road while covering her face to shield herself from pollution as air quality continues to worsen across northern India, in Gurugram, Haryana **PHOTO:PTI**

The assessment by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air found Chandigarh recorded the second-highest PM2.5 level at 70 micrograms per cubic metre from March 2024 to February 2025, followed by Haryana (63) and Tripura (62).

Assam (60), Bihar (59), West Bengal (57), Punjab (56), Meghalaya (53) and Nagaland (52) also breached national limits. Overall, 447 of 749 districts, 60 per cent, exceeded the annual NAAQS threshold of 40 micrograms per cubic metre. The most polluted districts were clustered primarily in Delhi and Assam, which together accounted for almost half of the top 50, while Bihar and Haryana contributed seven each. All monitored districts in Delhi, Assam, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, and J&K exceeded the standard, while several saw a vast majority crossing the limit. —*PTI*

Delhi cops to probe 'Naxal links' of protesters

NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

Delhi Police have added charges relating to "imputations and assertions prejudicial to national integration" in one of the FIRs filed against protesters who allegedly raised pro-Maoist slogans and used pepper spray on police personnel during an anti-pollution demonstration at India Gate on Sunday, officials said.

Police told a court on Monday that some of those arrested had shouted slogans praising slain Maoist commander Madvi Hidma. Two FIRs were registered — one at Kartavya Path police station against six protesters and another at Sansad Marg police station against 17. The newly added charge, Section 197 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), has been invoked only in the Kartavya Path FIR. After being produced before separate magisterial courts, 22 accused were remanded to judicial custody.

Section 197 pertains to assertions deemed harmful to national integration and covers the spread of information that threatens India's unity, sovereignty or security. The FIR notes slogans such as "Hidma amar rahe", "Kitne Hidma maroge, har ghar se Hidma nikalega" and "Hidma lal salaam."

Hidma, a top Maoist commander linked to multiple attacks over two decades, was killed along with his wife and four other Naxalites in an operation in Andhra Pradesh on 18 November.

According to police, they had prior information about the planned gathering at India Gate. Despite being told that protests were not permitted at the site, some participants allegedly breached barricades, blocked traffic and assaulted officers.

Several policemen were injured after pepper spray was reportedly used. The FIRs list multiple BNS sections, including those related to unlawful assembly, assault and obstruction of public servants. — *Agencies*

J&K family begins hunger strike over mysterious deaths

KATHUA, 25 NOV

Nearly nine months after three relatives died under unexplained circumstances, their families began an indefinite hunger strike on Tuesday, accusing police and the administration of failing to ensure justice. They demanded the case be handed to the CBI or NIA for an impartial probe.

The bodies of Varun Singh, 15, his uncle Yogesh Singh, 32, and maternal uncle Darshan Singh, 40, were found in a waterfall at Ishu Nallah in remote Malhar, three days after they went missing on 5 March while travelling to a wedding.

Led by Chamail Singh, who lost his son and brother, three relatives began their fast at the Shiv Temple in Kathua's Malhar area after a havan, joined by villagers from several nearby areas seeking a fair investigation.

Chamail alleged the trio were murdered and their bodies dumped by terrorists, criticising the lack of progress, missing forensic reports and the Special Investigation Team's failure to deliver results. —*PTI*

Sabarimala to serve 'Kerala Sadya'

KATHUA, 25 NOV

Pilgrims visiting the Lord Ayyappa temple in Sabarimala will soon be served a full Kerala sadya as part of the traditional annadanam, according to the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) sources said on Tuesday.

TDB president K Jayakumar said pulao and sambar, previously offered at the hill shrine, were not considered appropriate for devotees, prompting the shift to a sadya that includes payasam and pappad.

He clarified that annadanam is funded entirely through devotee contributions, not Board resources.

It was further said that the TDB is responsible for ensuring food quality at Sabarimala.

Jayakumar said the decision has been communicated to officials and is expected to take effect from Wednesday or Thursday.

A review meeting on 18 December will discuss the Sabarimala masterplan and preparations for next year's pilgrimage, which will begin by February 2026.

He added that despite some early issues this season, temple operations are now running smoothly. —*PTI*

AP records botanical leap with new hoya species

ITANAGAR, 25 NOV

Arunachal Pradesh has achieved a major scientific milestone with the discovery of a new plant species, Hoya dawodiensis, in the remote and biodiversity-rich Vijoynagar region of Changlang district. Chief Minister Pema Khandu hailed the finding as a "remarkable chapter" in the state's expanding legacy of botanical research.

Researchers said the discovery is particularly significant because Vijoynagar, accessible only by air or long treks, remains one of Arunachal Pradesh's least explored yet most biologically rich landscapes. Scientists have also recorded Hoya yingjiangensis for the first time in India and documented Hoya nummularia in the state for the first time. Hoyas belong to a large group of tropical flowering plants.

Officials noted that these findings further strengthen the state's botanical records, which have rapidly grown in recent years following a series of amphibian, orchid and balsam discoveries. —*PTI*

SEEKS RS 50 CR COMPENSATION

Actor Jaitly sues hubby for domestic violence

MUMBAI, 25 NOV

Actor Celina Jaitly has filed a domestic violence complaint in a Mumbai court alleging prolonged emotional, physical, sexual and verbal abuse by her Austrian husband, Peter Haag.

The application, moved through the law firm Karanjwala & Co, came up for hearing on Tuesday before Judicial Magistrate SC Tadye, who issued a notice to Haag and listed the matter for 12 December.

Jaitly, 47, has accused Haag of cruelty, manipulation and conduct amounting to domestic violence under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act. She alleged that she was compelled to flee their home in Austria due to the "severe and continuing abuse" inflicted by her husband.

The couple married in September 2010 and has three children. In her plea, the former Miss India claimed Haag barred her from working after marriage and frequently displayed "short temper, alcoholic tendencies and narcissistic behaviour", which she said caused her sustained mental distress. She also detailed multiple alleged incidents of physical and verbal assault.

The complaint states that Haag initiated divorce proceedings in Austria in August this year. Jaitly has sought Rs 50 crore as compensation and Rs 10 lakh per month as maintenance, asserting that she has been left without financial support. She has also requested access to her three children, who are currently living with Haag in Austria.

The court has asked Haag to respond to the allegations. Further proceedings will be taken up during the next hearing. — *PTI*

SUPERMAN SOARS AGAIN

A rare 1939 Superman No. 1 comic has sold for USD 9.12 million, setting a new world record and surpassing last year's USD 6 million sale of Action Comics No. 1. Three brothers discovered the remarkably preserved issue in their late mother's San Francisco attic. Rated 9.0 by Heritage Auctions, the first-edition copy remained in superb condition thanks to the cool Northern California climate. Fewer than 500 copies are believed to survive. Both the family and the buyer have chosen to remain anonymous

PHOTO: PTI

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After 42 yrs, Nellie killings haunt Assam again

The wounds of the Nellie massacre, considered the worst incident of communal violence in Assam, have festered for long, and the placing of the reports on it in the assembly on Tuesday brought to the fore the state's darkest chapter again after 42 years.

On the cold morning of 18 February, 1983, in the small town of Nellie in Central Assam's Morigaon district, over 2,000 people, most of them immigrant Bengali-speaking Muslims, were killed allegedly by Tiwa (Lalung) tribals, while almost three lakh people were rendered homeless, according to reports available in the public domain. The Himanta Biswa Sarma government laid in the assembly the reports of two probe panels - TP Tewary Commission set up by the government, and TU Mehta Commission formed by a civil society group and supporters of the Assam Agitation – on Tuesday, months before the Assembly elections. The violence too had occurred against the backdrop of the holding of the assembly polls in the state in 1983, despite opposition by the supporters of the Assam agitation against illegal foreigners in the state. The state was then under the President's Rule.

The agitation that began in 1979 was spearheaded by the All-Assam Students' Union (AASU) and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP), and they called a boycott of the elections, which received popular support and even led to the resignation of over 150 government and public sector officials in the state. In the run-up to the elections, over 150 supporters of the agitation died due to police firings, and an estimated 5,000 people had lost their lives in the ethnic and communal clashes at various places including Nellie, Gohpur, Khoirabari, Sipajhar, Jamugurihat and Silapathar. A fear had been created among the indigenous population, including the Tiwas, at that time, that reserved tribal lands were being taken over by the immigrants for cultivation, their cattle stolen and finally they would permanently settle on these plots. The immediate trigger was rumours spreading that immigrant Bengali Muslims had kidnapped and gang-raped four young women from a Tiwa family, killed six children, illegally cultivated Tiwa lands, and stolen cows, along with attacking a Bihari village in that area.

The agitation that began in 1979 was spearheaded by the All-Assam Students' Union and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

There was, however, neither any FIR nor records of criminal proceedings against the alleged perpetrators.

The Nellie massacre, which lasted over seven hours in a single day, started in the village of Borbori and spread to Nellie and 14 other Muslim-majority villages in the area. In Nellie, a mob burnt a large number of houses and guarded all roads and exits to the village, killing anyone who tried to escape.

The massacre ended with the arrival of the CRPF personnel in the evening, with survivors alleging that the local police had abetted in the violence and had even initially stopped the central security personnel from entering the villages.

Police filed 688 criminal cases, of which 378 cases were closed due to "lack of evidence", and 310 cases were slated to be charged. However, all cases were dropped by the Government of India as a part of the 1985 Assam Accord and as a result, none were prosecuted.

The six-year-long Assam Agitation ended with the signing of the Accord. A commission, headed by bureaucrat TP Tewary, was set up by the government, but the AASU and the AAGSP, did not testify. Following that, the 'Assam Freedom Fighters' Association' took the initiative to constitute the non-governmental Mehta commission in January 1984 to probe into the incident.

The Assam Cabinet had recently decided to place the Tewary Commission report in the state assembly, following which the AASU requested that the Mehta Commission be also placed in the house. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had said that in 1987, the then AGP government headed by Prafulla Kumar Mahanta had placed the report in the assembly and had promised that he would provide printed copies to legislators. It was, however, not given to the MLAs and MPs and even the assembly library does not have it.

Mahanta himself had led the agitation as the AASU president and later formed the political party Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), storming to power as the then youngest chief minister after the signing of the Assam Accord in 1985. Sarma said the state cabinet decided that the report will be circulated among the members of the legislative assembly and copies will also be provided to the assembly library.

He said that the placing of both the reports was an ''academic exercise'' and will bring to fore a ''big chapter in Assam's history''. As the incumbent CM had said, the house did not discuss the two reports on Tuesday. Sarma had also claimed that the "highlight" of the Tewary commission report is its documentation of "demographic change", and the prevailing tensions during that period. —PTI

SALAR

RSF is committing war crimes in Sudan: Amnesty

Amnesty International on Tuesday said that atrocities committed by a Sudanese paramilitary group in a Darfur city constituted war crimes, the latest such accusation in the country's devastating war.

In a report, the international rights group said that it gathered testimony describing barbarities carried out by the Rapid Support Forces, or RSF, when its fighters wrestled control of el-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur province, from the army late last month.

The group said that the atrocities included executing dozens of unarmed men and raping women and girls. Amnesty said that other people were taken hostage by RSF fighters for ransom, and that witnesses said they saw "hundreds of dead bodies left lying" in the city's streets and on main roads out of el-Fasher.

"This persistent, widespread violence against civilians constitutes war crimes and may also constitute other crimes under international law," said Agnès Callamard, Amnesty's secretary-general.

The RSF didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. The group has acknowledged that some of its fighters committed violations in the city and vowed to investigate.

The RSF, which has been at war with the Sudanese military for more than 2½ years, seized el-Fasher late in October after more than an 18-month siege. The city was the military's last stronghold in the sprawling region of Darfur.

Witnesses told The Associated Press last month that RSF fighters went house to house, killing civilians and committing sexual assaults. The World Health Organisation say that gunmen killed at least 460 people at a hospital, and abducted doctors and nurses.

- The group said that the atrocities included executing dozens of unarmed men and raping women and girls. Amnesty said that other people were taken hostage by RSF fighters for ransom, and that witnesses said they saw "hundreds of dead bodies left lying" in the city's streets and on main roads out of el-Fasher.

Amnesty said in its report that the group's researchers spoke with 28 survivors who managed to flee el-Fasher. The witnesses described "witnessing groups of men shot or beaten" and the taking of hostages for ransom.

The group said that RSF fighters sexually assaulted women and girls. It cited one woman who said that she and her 14-year-old daughter were raped by RSF fighters on 27 October while they were trying to flee the city.

The woman said her daughter's health condition deteriorated, and she died in a clinic in Tawila, a town around 60km west of el-Fasher, which has become a hub for those fleeing RSF atrocities, according to Amnesty.

Another 29-year-old woman said that she was one of 11 women taken by RSF fighters and raped while they were attempting to flee the city on Oct. 26. She said she was raped three times by a fighter, while another one watched.

"The world must not look away as more details emerge about the RSF's brutal attack on el-Fasher," said Callamard, calling for holding accountable all those responsible for committing atrocities.

She lashed out at the United Arab Emirates over its alleged support of the RSF, which she said "is fueling a relentless cycle of violence against civilians in Sudan."

"These atrocities were facilitated by the United Arab Emirates' support for the RSF," she said.

The UAE has long denied the accusation.

Sudan's war began in April 2023 over a power struggle between the military and the RSF. The conflict has killed more than 40,000 people, a figure rights groups consider a significant undercount, and has created a grave humanitarian crisis, with more than 14 million people displaced.

The RSF is largely made up of fighters from the Arab Janjaweed militia, which is accused of carrying out a government-backed genocidal campaign in Darfur in the 2000s in which around 3,00,000 people were killed.

The group has been accused of a series of atrocities over the course of the current war, and the Biden administration, in one of its last decisions, said that the RSF committed genocide in Darfur. The military has also been accused of atrocities, but not to the same level as the paramilitary force. —PTI

In a report, the rights group said that it gathered testimony describing barbarities carried out by RSF, when its fighters wrestled control of el-Fasher

PHOTO: AMNESTY

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

'Quiet, piggy' & slurs: How men fuel abuse against women in media

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, marked on Tuesday, opens 16 days of UN-led activism urging governments and societies to confront all forms of violence against women and girls. This year's theme, "End digital violence against all women and girls", spotlights the rapid rise of online abuse, an escalating threat particularly visible in political life.

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence, as defined by the United Nations, includes hate speech, cyber-harassment, doxxing, image-based abuse, threats, gendered disinformation and coordinated campaigns intended to intimidate or silence. Such attacks can cause physical, psychological, social, political and economic harm.

Women disproportionately targeted

Women in public-facing roles, especially politicians, journalists and activists, are frequently targeted, with the intent of pushing them out of public debate. While stereotypes often depict abusers as anonymous individuals ranting behind keyboards, researchers note that some political leaders openly promote misogyny online.

British scholar Nitasha Kaul argues that leaders who cultivate a "masculinist strongman ideal", such as Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin and Narendra Modi, use misogyny to assert dominance. By portraying women and men who reject rigid masculine norms as inferior, they reinforce their power, silence opponents and restrict democratic participation.

Political scientist Suzanne Dovi identifies three stages of political misogyny: elites issue "nasty claims" about prominent women; those claims activate broader prejudices; and audiences ultimately internalise them.

Digital platforms magnify misogyny

The reach and speed of online platforms make them ideal spaces for spreading gendered hate. In 2017, a Conservative MP labelled former Canadian environment minister Catherine McKenna "Climate Barbie". McKenna has since detailed the violent online campaigns that followed, including memes depicting her being crushed by a sledgehammer and messages reading "Tick Tock, Barbie Bitch."

In 2023, former Conservative leader Andrew Scheer posted a "wanted"-style graphic featuring two women senators, urging supporters to call their offices while falsely accusing them of blocking debate. Senator Bernadette Clement, who identifies as Black, then received racist abuse and a threatening phone call, while Senator Chantal Petitclerc reported a deluge of sexist voicemails.

During a press gaggle aboard Air Force One, President Donald Trump told Bloomberg correspondent Catherine Lucey to be 'quiet, piggy' after she asked about Jeffrey Epstein files

PHOTO: SCREENGRABS

Women journalists are increasingly subjected to similar attacks, often fuelled by political figures. In 2021, several racialised women journalists in Canada were targeted with rape and death threats after People's Party of Canada leader Maxime Bernier encouraged supporters to "play dirty" with them.

In the US, Donald Trump has repeatedly used gendered slurs against women journalists, recently telling one reporter: "quiet, piggy."

Real-world consequences

Online political misogyny frequently spills over into physical risk. Following Trump's 20 November Truth Social post encouraging violence against his opponents, Congresswoman Jasmine Crockett's office received a threat from a white supremacist. Writing afterwards, Crockett noted: "When leaders promote hate, hate shows up, sometimes right at our door."

Research shows these threats have serious democratic consequences. Studies by Canadian academics, including Cheryl Collier, link gender-based violence in politics to the exclusion of women's voices, diminishing the breadth of expertise in public office.

- The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, marked on Tuesday, opens 16 days of UN-led activism urging governments and societies to confront all forms of violence against women and girls. This year's theme, "End digital violence against all women and girls", spotlights the rapid rise of online abuse, an escalating threat particularly visible in political life.

Journalism is similarly affected. Australian scholar Julie Posetti and colleagues at the International Centre for Journalists have found that online abuse discourages women journalists, and their sources, from participating in public debate, undermining accountability at a time when misinformation is rife.

What can be done?

The UN campaign calls for concrete action to curb online political misogyny. Governments worldwide, experts say, must pass and enforce laws criminalising digitally motivated hate and violence. Technology companies must strengthen platform safety measures and adopt transparent conduct codes to prevent abuse from spreading unchecked.

Efforts must also address the social drivers of misogyny. Men and boys need access to mental health support and positive models of masculinity to counter harmful norms that equate masculinity with dominance or aggression.

Citizens can help by supporting organisations fighting gender-based violence — such as the Native Women's Association of Canada, WomanACT, White Ribbon — or by donating to local women's shelters.

Ultimately, experts stress that public leaders carry the greatest responsibility. They must reject misogyny in all forms and model respectful discourse. Initiatives such as Governor General Mary Simon's "Building a Safer and Respectful Digital World" campaign and Elect Respect, launched by Burlington Mayor Marianne Meed Ward, offer promising examples of leadership aimed at restoring civility and protecting democratic participation. —PTI

PHOTO: X

Brazil SC upholds Bolsonaro's incarceration

BRASILIA, 25 NOV

Brazil's Supreme Court on Monday upheld former president Jair Bolsonaro's incarceration after he admitted attempting to break his ankle monitor while under house arrest, an act a justice described as an escape attempt. Bolsonaro, 70, was arrested early Saturday and taken to federal police headquarters in Brasília. A four-judge panel unanimously ruled he must remain in pre-emptive detention. Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who issued the warrant, said Bolsonaro posed a flight risk as he prepares to begin a 27-year sentence for leading an attempted coup following his 2022 election loss. Bolsonaro claimed medication-induced hallucinations prompted the incident, but De Moraes noted his "serious foul play" and repeated breaches of court orders. *—PTI*

2 climbers die on New Zealand's highest peak

WELLINGTON, 25 NOV

Two climbers were found dead on New Zealand's highest peak, while two others from their group were rescued uninjured. Police say the pair fell near the summit and were later found deceased in difficult alpine conditions. The group first signalled for help late Monday, 24 November, prompting overnight helicopter searches. Aoraki peak is known for its challenging terrain, unpredictable weather, and high accident rate, with more than 240 recorded deaths. Several climbers have never been found, including three experienced North American mountaineers believed to have died there in 2024. *—PTI*

BBC leaders quizzed after Trump lawsuit threat

LONDON, 25 NOV

BBC chairman Samir Shah told MPs the broadcaster was "too slow" to correct a misleading edit of US President Donald Trump's speech but rejected claims of political bias. Shah and senior executives testified before Parliament's Culture, Media and Sport Committee after the resignations of the director general and head of news, and Trump's threat of a billion-dollar lawsuit. A leaked memo had accused the BBC of bias ahead of the 2024 US election. Shah admitted the documentary Trump: A Second Chance? misrepresented Trump's 6 January remarks. The BBC has expressed regret but denies defamation. Board member Robbie Gibb dismissed claims of pro-Conservative sway. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

China spacecraft to rescue stranded astronauts

CHINA-SPACE

China has launched the Shenzhou 22 spacecraft to restore a safe return path for three astronauts on the Tiangong space station after a damaged craft left them without an emergency option. The new vehicle will support their planned 2026 return, following a separate incident in which a Shenzhou 20 crew was delayed nine days due to a cracked window and ultimately came home aboard Shenzhou 21. The damaged Shenzhou 20 will be brought down later for assessment. Tiangong, constructed after China was barred from the International Space Station, has hosted rotating crews since 2021 as part of Beijing's expanding space program. *—PTI*

Pak strikes kill 10, mostly children, says Afghanistan

Taliban vows retaliation after raids wreck Kunar, Paktika

KABUL, 25 NOV

In a sign of worsening tensions between the two neighbours, Afghanistan's Taliban government on Tuesday accused Pakistan of launching overnight airstrikes in three eastern provinces, killing 10 civilians, including nine children.

The chief spokesperson for the Afghan government, Zabihullah Mujahid said on X that Pakistan "bombed" the home of a civilian in Khost province, killing nine children and a woman. He said additional strikes were carried out in the provinces of Kunar and Paktika, injuring four others.

Pakistan's military and government did not immediately comment on the allegation, which comes more than a month after cross-border clashes erupted when the Afghan government claimed Pakistani drone strikes hit Kabul.

The chief spokesperson for the Afghan government said that Pakistan "bombed" the home of a civilian in Khost province *PHOTO: X*

The latest escalation follows a deadly attack a day earlier in Pakistan's northwestern city of Peshawar, where two suicide bombers and a gunman stormed the headquarters of the Federal Constabulary. Three officers were killed, and 11 others were wounded in the Monday morning attack.

No group has claimed responsibility for the Peshawar attack, but suspicion quickly fell on the Pakistani Taliban, or Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan.

Pakistan has repeatedly urged Afghanistan's Taliban rulers to prevent TTP militants from using Afghan territory to launch attacks. Kabul denies the accusation, but relations further deteriorated after Afghanistan blamed Pakistan for the 9 October drone strikes on its capital and threatened retaliation. The clashes that followed killed dozens of soldiers, civilians and militants before Qatar brokered a ceasefire on 19 October.

Meanwhile, Pakistan on Tuesday, killed 22 terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in an intelligence-based operation in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the Military Media Wing said. Security forces conducted the operation on Monday, based on the intelligence report on the presence of terrorists in Bannu district bordering north Waziristan, a statement issued by Inter-Services Public Relations said. *—PTI*

US holds Russia, Ukraine peace talks in Abu Dhabi

ABU DHABI/ KYIV, 25 NOV

- The meet follows progress in Geneva, where US and Ukraine agreed to modify a 28-point US proposal that Kyiv and European allies had initially viewed as overly favourable to Moscow

US Army Secretary Dan Driscoll met Russian officials in Abu Dhabi on Monday, advancing President Donald Trump's push for a Russia-Ukraine peace deal.

A US official said talks would continue Tuesday, though the Russian delegation's makeup was unclear. Driscoll, an ally of VP JD Vance, is also expected to meet Kyrylo Budanov, Ukraine's military intelligence chief.

The meeting follows progress in Geneva, where US and Ukrainian negotiators agreed to revise a 28-point American proposal Kyiv and European partners initially viewed as too favourable to Moscow. A Ukrainian delegate suggested Trump and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy may soon meet to settle the most sensitive issues.

French President Emmanuel Macron welcomed momentum toward peace but warned France will not back any settlement resembling Ukrainian "capitulation," saying territorial decisions rest with Kyiv.

The diplomatic push comes amid intensified attacks. Russian strikes on Kyiv on Tuesday killed at least six people and damaged homes and energy facilities. Odesa also reported casualties.

Russia said three people were killed and eight injured in a Ukrainian drone attack in the Rostov region, and claimed its defences intercepted 249 Ukrainian drones overnight. A US official said Driscoll met Russian officials again Tuesday, adding all sides want a ceasefire "as quickly as possible." *—PTI*

Anger brews in Bangladesh after 'Baul' singer's arrest

DHAKA, 25 NOV

Several eminent Bangladeshi civil society figures on Monday denounced the arrest of a 'baul' singer on charges of "hurting" the public's sentiments and subsequent Islamists attack on fellow mystic minstrels in the past few days. They claimed that religious strife had increased since the ouster of the Sheikh Hasina government.

A statement signed by 250 distinguished citizens said that "in the period following the July uprising that toppled prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League regime in 2024, religious extremism has surged, in the country. A particular group has emerged as a 'sole agent' of Islam, embarking on a purge across the country. The "weapon of choice" has consistently been the ruse of blow to the public sentiment and thus creating a "suffocating situation".

"Demolishing more than 200 shrines, declaring countless individuals murtad-kafir-shatim, exhuming and burning body, forcibly cutting the hair of bauls and fakirs on the street, harassing women over movement and attire, and disrupting programmes involving dance, music, theatre, and even sports and fairs -- eradication of people of different opinions and practices appears to be their objective," the noted members of the public said.

The statement, signed mostly by academics who were opposed to the past regime, including economist Professor Anu Mohammad and Prof Salimullah Khan, said it was evident that those entrusted with maintaining law and order were not taking any effective steps to stop "mob terror or vigilantism." *—PTI*

- Several eminent Bangladeshi figures denounced the arrest, claiming that religious strife had increased since the ouster of the Sheikh Hasin govt

Don to visit Beijing in April; Xi plans US trip

WASHINGTON, 25 NOV

US President Donald Trump said on Monday he had accepted Chinese President Xi Jinping's invitation to visit Beijing in April and had invited Xi for a state visit to the United States later next year. The announcement followed their first phone call since meeting in South Korea nearly a month ago. Trump said they discussed Ukraine, fentanyl and renewed Chinese purchases of American soybeans, calling the US-China relationship "extremely strong."

Beijing confirmed the call but did not mention state visits, instead highlighting talks on Taiwan, trade and Ukraine. Xi reiterated that Taiwan's return to mainland China was "an integral part of the post-war international order," a point Trump did not raise publicly. Analysts said the differing readouts showed lingering tensions even as both sides emphasised cooperation.

Trump said they discussed Ukraine and renewed Chinese purchases of US soybeans, calling their relationship "extremely strong." *PHOTO: X*

The call came amid worsening China-Japan ties after Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi suggested Japan's military could intervene if China moved against Taiwan. Beijing condemned the remarks, with Foreign Minister Wang Yi saying Japan had "crossed a red line." Earlier this month, Taipei said the Trump administration approved USD 330 million in arms sales, prompting Beijing to protest. China also voiced hope for a "fair, lasting and binding" Ukraine peace deal. On trade, Trump cited "significant progress," pointing to renewed soybean purchases and China's curbs on fentanyl, alongside limited US tariff relief." *—PTI*

Trump has 'commonsense' view on H1B: White House

NEW YORK/ WASHINGTON, 25 NOV

US President Donald Trump holds a "very nuanced and commonsense opinion" on H-1B visas and does not support replacing American workers with foreign hires, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said on Monday. She stressed that Trump's position has been widely mischaracterised, noting that he allows foreign workers only when companies investing "trillions" in the US need niche expertise, such as in battery or semiconductor manufacturing, to get facilities operational.

Leavitt said Trump ultimately insists that foreign investors must "hire American workers" and is focused on revitalising US manufacturing through tariffs and targeted trade deals. Amid criticism from his MAGA base, Trump has said he would "welcome" skilled immigrants who can help launch complex plants and train US workers in areas like chip and missile production. *—PTI*

US BRASS IN CARIBBEAN AS DON PRESSURES VENEZUELA

Washington, 25 Nov

Gen Dan Caine, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and President Donald Trump's top military adviser, visited US troops in Puerto Rico and aboard a Navy warship as the US maintains an unusually large regional fleet targeting alleged drug-smuggling boats. The buildup, including an advanced aircraft carrier and Marines deployed since September, coincides with Trump weighing possible military action against Venezuela. The US has struck 21 suspected drug boats, killing more than 80 people, and escalated pressure by designating the Cartel de los Soles — which it links to President Nicolás Maduro, as a foreign terrorist organisation. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said the label gives Washington "new options," while stressing no specific action is guaranteed.

PAKISTAN TO EXPORT 1,00,000 TONNES OF RICE TO BANGLADESH

This is the highest consignment of rice to Bangladesh from Pakistan to date *PHOTO: X*

KARACHI, 25 NOV

Pakistan will export 1,00,000 tonnes of rice to Bangladesh, marking their largest shipment yet and reflecting improved ties since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's ouster last August.

The first 50,000-tonne batch was dispatched after both countries resumed government-level rice trade in February.

A leading exporter said rising demand from Bangladesh could boost the sector, which saw a 28 per cent drop in exports in the first quarter of FY 2025-26.

Waqar Ahmed, a Punjab-based mill owner, said Pakistani exporters had competed strongly with India over the past year.

However, now they see greater opportunities in the US market due to Washington's 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods, including Basmati rice. *—PTI*

- The first batch of 50,000 tonnes of rice was exported after both countries began government-level trade with rice imports in February this year

'Dead' Thai woman wakes up in coffin at crematorium

BANGKOK, 25 NOV

A 65-year-old Thai woman, believed dead, startled temple staff when she began moving inside her coffin before a planned cremation.

Staff witnesses at Wat Rat Prakhong Tham said they heard faint knocking from the white coffin as it arrived in the back of a pickup truck. When staff opened the lid, they were stunned to see the woman's eyes slowly opening.

The woman had been bedridden for about two years, according to her brother, and stopped breathing two days earlier. With no official death certificate, he drove her to a local hospital where she had previously wished to donate her organs, but medical staff refused to accept the body without documentation.

Unable to proceed medically, the brother took her to the temple, which provides free cremation services. The discovery that she was still alive halted preparations immediately, and emergency services were notified. Thai news outlets report that doctors later identified hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) as the likely cause of her state, noting that severe episodes can mimic death-like symptoms in chronically ill patients. *—PTI*

Doctors cited low sugar as the likely cause of her state *PHOTO: PTI*

EXPELLED FOR REST OF THE YEAR

Aus Parl bars senator over burqa act

MELBOURNE, 25 NOV

An Australian senator, who is campaigning for a national burqa ban, was barred from Parliament for the rest of the year for wearing the Muslim garment in the chamber.

Pauline Hanson, the 71-year-old leader of the anti-Muslim, anti-immigration One Nation Party, was accused of performing a disrespectful stunt on Monday when she walked into the Senate shrouded in a head-to-ankle garment to protest fellow senators' refusal to consider her bill that would ban the burqa and other full-face coverings in public places.

Senators suspended her for the rest of the day on Monday. In the absence of an apology, they passed a censure motion on Tuesday that carried one of the harshest penalties against a senator in recent decades. She was barred from seven consecutive Senate sitting days. Hanson later told she would be judged by voters at the next election in 2028.

Senators suspended Hanson for the rest of the day on Monday and in the absence of apology, they passed a censure motion *PHOTO: PTI*

"They didn't want to ban the burqa, yet they denied me the right to wear it on the floor of Parliament. There is no dress code on the floor of Parliament, yet I'm not allowed to wear it. So to me, it's been hypocritical," she said.

Hanson, who gave a speech at the annual Conservative Political Action Conference in Florida this month, created outrage in 2017 when she wore a burqa in the Senate in a similar protest. She wasn't punished on that occasion. The government leader in the Senate, Malaysian-born Penny Wong, who is not Muslim, moved the censure motion on Tuesday. Wong said by wearing the burqa, Hanson had "mocked and vilified an entire faith" that was observed by almost 1 million Australians among 28 million. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Gold climbs by ₹3,500 to ₹ 1.28L/10g

NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

Gold prices climbed Rs 3,500 to Rs 1,28,900 per 10g in the national capital on Tuesday amid fresh buying by local jewellers and retailers for the wedding festivities, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Snapping its three-day losing streak, the precious metal of 99.5 per cent purity appreciated by Rs 3,500 to Rs 1,28,300 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). Silver prices also witnessed buying interest in tandem with gold. The white metal soared by Rs 5,800 to Rs 1,60,800 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). In the overseas market, spot gold was trading 0.09 per cent lower at USD 4,131.09 per ounce in New York, while spot silver fell 0.40 per cent at USD 51.15 per ounce. *—PTI*

Rupee settles 4P lower at 89.2 against USD

MUMBAI, 25 NOV

The rupee pared initial gains and settled 4 paise lower at 89.20 (provisional) against the greenback on Tuesday, weighed down by negative cues from domestic equity markets. Falling crude oil prices supported the Indian currency at lower level, however, withdrawal of foreign funds kept the rupee under pressure, forex analysts said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 89.02 and touched an intraday low of 89.27 against the greenback. The unit ended the session at 89.20 (provisional) against the US dollar, registering a loss of 4 paise from its previous closing level. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was lower by 0.06 per cent at 100.01. *—PTI*

S'pore asks Apple, Google to curb govt spoof scam

INGAPORE, 25 NOV

Singapore Police has ordered Apple and Google to take steps to prevent government impersonation scam messages on iMessage and Google Messages. These measures are aimed at preventing "spoofing", a technique cybercriminals use to disguise themselves as a known or trusted source, said the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in a press release on Tuesday. The mandated measures include preventing accounts and group chats from displaying names that spoof "gov.sg" or government agencies, or filtering messages from accounts and group chats with such names. Apple and Google, must also ensure that the profile names of unknown senders are not displayed or displayed less prominently than their phone numbers, said MHA. *—PTI*

Accel, Google partner to boost India's AI startups

NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

Accel, a global venture firm, has collaborated with Google's AI Futures Fund to launch the 2026 AI cohort under its Atoms programme. This partnership aims to support Indian founders creating cutting-edge AI companies, including those in the Indian diaspora. The programme will provide up to $2 million in co-investment for each startup—Accel committing up to $1 million, matched by the Google AI Futures Fund. "This first-of-its-kind collaboration will induce capital and confidence in Indian AI builders," it noted. Beyond financial backing, participants will receive up to $350,000 in the compute credits, allowing access to Google Cloud resources and cutting-edge models. Founders will benefit from mentorship sessions and co-development opportunities with Google Labs and DeepMind teams. *—PTI*

India may impose steel import tariffs

India is currently facing an anti-dumping threat due to cheap China imports

NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

The Indian government, to curb imports of cheaper products dumped in Indian markets, is considering to impose an import duty on certain steel products, stated a report by Reuters on Tuesday.

According to the report, the cheap imports dumped in the markets are mostly from China.

A Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) finding in August stated that India recommended 11 per cent to 12 per cent of three-year import tariffs on some imported steel products.

India in April had previously imposed a temporary nationwide 12 per cent tariff on all foreign imports for a period of 200 days, which expired in November, the sources said.

India is the second-largest crude steel producer in the world *PHOTO: ANI*

India is the second-largest crude steel producer in the world. Due to the cheap steel imports from China, India is currently facing an anti-dumping threat, which will be a challenge to the domestic steel producers.

Additionally, the Commerce Ministry is conducting a comprehensive mapping of mandatory and voluntary non-tariff measures across global markets to strengthen export quality and technical compliance, according to the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT).

The exercise is part of designing the support for export quality and technical compliance under the recently approved Export Promotion Mission.

To build an accurate and actionable database, exporters, export promotion councils, commodity boards, and industry associations are requested to furnish information on relevant NTMs and certification requirements, it said.

The DGFT said that inputs must be submitted within seven days.

Most NTMs are rules created by countries to protect human, animal or plant health and the environment. NTM may include "Technical" measures like regulations, standards, testing, certification, pre-shipment inspection or "Non-Technical" measures, including quotas, import licensing, subsidies, and government procurement restrictions, among others.

These hurdles increase costs for traders. *—Agencies*

'Cheap Chinese imports affecting private capex'

MUMBAI, 25 NOV

Economist Sajjid Chinoy has pitched for a relook into the government's curb on foreign direct investments from China, arguing that allowing Chinese investments in the country will be more advantageous than slapping tariffs on imports from the northern neighbour.

Chinoy, the chief India economist at JP Morgan, who is also a part-time member in the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), said that the private capital expenditure is down due to the lack of demand visibility amid the flood of cheaper Chinese imports.

Chinese exports into the United States were a free flowing river, but the 32 per cent tariff slapped by the Donald Trump administration is acting like a wall, leading to the same goods being spilled out into other emerging markets like India, he said. *—PTI*

Markets fall for 3rd day amid foreign fund outflows

MUMBAI, 25 NOV

Stock markets closed lower for the third consecutive session on Tuesday with the benchmark Sensex sliding nearly 314 points due to selling in IT and auto shares as foreign fund outflows dampened investor sentiment.

In a volatile trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 313.70 points or 0.37 per cent to settle at 84,587.01 with 24 of its constituents closing lower and six with gains. During the day, it fell by 363.98 points or 0.42 per cent to 84,536.73.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 74.70 points or 0.29 per cent to 25,884.80. Nifty has dropped 307 points or over 1 per cent in three sessions since Friday to slip below the 26,000 level while Sensex has shed 1,045 points or 1.2 per cent during the period.

Among Sensex stocks, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles, Trent, Infosys, Power Grid, HDFC Bank, HCL Tech, Kotak Mahindra Bank, ICICI Bank and Bajaj Finance were the major laggards.

However, Bharat Electronics, State Bank of India, Tata Steel, Eternal, Bharti Airtel and Reliance Industries were the gainers.

Broader markets were positive with the BSE smallcap gauge rising by 0.20 per cent and midcap index by 0.19 per cent.

Realty, commodities, healthcare, telecommunication, capital goods and metal were the gainers. *—PTI*

J&K has almost 1BT of limestone reserves: Govt

JAMMU, 25 NOV

The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has estimated that Jammu and Kashmir holds nearly 1 billion tonnes (BT) of limestone reserves, a senior central government official has said.

Additional Secretary in the Union Ministry of Mines Sanjay Lohiya noted that the Union Territory also has significant potential for other key minerals, which the J&K government intends to explore and utilize for the benefit of the people of the region.

Expressing satisfaction over Jammu and Kashmir becoming part of India's mineral block auction map with the launch of the first limestone block auction and roadshow here, the official said the Centre would extend full support to accelerate exploration, development and investments in the sector. Union minister G Kishan Reddy, J&K CM Omar Abdullah and his deputy Surinder Choudhary jointly launched the e-auction of seven limestone mineral blocks, covering about 314 hectares, across the districts of Anantnag, Rajouri, and Poonch here on Monday.

Asserting that J&K is on one end of the country and transporting cement becomes very costly, he said, "it will be very good if we are able to meet the increasing demand of cement in this area through local production of cement." *—PTI*

Reliance Industries' shares rally 1% marking 52-week high

NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

Reliance Industries' share price surged over one per cent to Rs 1,552, marking a new 52-week high in Tuesday's trading session. The oil-to-telecom behemoth's stock rallied following JP Morgan's reaffirmation of an 'overweight' rating, which projected a robust outlook for FY26. The brokerage anticipates an upside potential of up to 11 per cent, setting a target price of Rs 1,727 per share.

Notably, the Mukesh Ambani-led firm has seen its stock appreciate nearly 4 per cent over the past month and over 8 per cent in the last six months. Year-to-date, the RIL share price has risen by an impressive 27 per cent in 2025.

JP Morgan's bullish stance on RIL is attributed to its attractive valuation relative to competitors like D-Mart and Bharti Airtel, despite a 15 per cent holding-company discount. It highlighted that the earnings pressure from soft refining and petrochemical results during FY24-25 is largely behind the company, with rising refining margins potentially leading to earnings upgrades. It also pointed to several possible triggers for 2026, including a potential Jio IPO, anticipated telecom tariff hikes, advancements in new energy projects, and steadier retail growth. *—Agencies*

ADANI GETS NOD FOR KERALA'S AIRPORT HOTEL

T'PURAM, 25 NOV

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change cleared a Rs 136-crore luxury hotel proposal by Adani Airport Holdings Ltd within the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport premises.

The approval followed a detailed review by the Expert Appraisal Committee (Infra-2) during its August meeting, sources said on Tuesday.

The project, spread across a little over 8,000 sq m inside the airport area, includes a 240-room hotel with food-and-beverage facilities offering 660 seats.

According to official documents, the site is currently used as an open parking area within the airport, operated by the Adani Group.

The land was handed over to the Adani Group's airport arm under a long-term concession agreement signed with the Airports Authority of India in January 2021.

The proposed five-storey structure will have a height of 23 metres, with two basement levels for parking, a ground floor and four upper floors. The total built-up area is estimated at nearly 34,000 sq m.

Authorities said the project would rely on treated water from an on-site sewage treatment plant, with recycling expected to meet about half of its daily water requirement. Solid waste will be managed through organic-waste converters and authorised recyclers. *—PTI*

No signs of AI bubble, says JP Morgan

NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

The current rally in artificial intelligence (AI) related investments is justified and sustainable, and there are no signs of a bubble forming at this stage, highlighted a latest report by JP Morgan.

The report noted that while the ingredients for a market bubble do exist, including high expectations and rapid investment flows, the present cycle is supported by strong fundamentals such as massive capital expenditure (Capex) and accelerating adoption.

The report stated that "The ingredients are certainly in place for a market bubble to form, but for now, at least, we believe the rally in AI-related investments is justified and sustainable. Capex is massive, and adoption is accelerating."

It added that historically, bubbles often emerge from the belief that a new technology or structural shift will fundamentally change the world. Examples include the railroad boom of the 1840s and the Internet boom in the late 1990s.

The report explained that both the railroad and internet booms did eventually transform the world, but they also created excess capacity far ahead of real demand. *—ANI*

Chh'garh gets investments worth Rs 6,826 cr in summit

NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

Chhattisgarh has received industrial investment proposals to the tune of Rs 6,321 crore and Rs 505 crore for development of the tourism sector, which are expected to generate over 3,000 employment opportunities in the coming years.

The investment proposals were received at the 'Investor Connect' programme held here on Tuesday and attended by Chhattisgarh Chief Minister **Vishnu Deo Sai**, a state government release said. Chhattisgarh received unprecedented investment proposals at the 'Investor Connect' programme, where leading companies from sectors such as steel, energy and tourism expressed interest in setting up new industries, expanding capacity, building hotels and developing waste-to-energy projects in the state, the release said.

The participating companies proposed Rs 6,321.25 crore in industrial investments and Rs 505 crore in tourism investments, which are expected to generate over 3,000 employment opportunities in the coming years, it said. *—PTI*

Tamil Nadu signs 158 MoUs worth Rs 43,844 crore

CHENNAI, 25 NOV

The Tamil Nadu government is transforming Coimbatore from a traditional manufacturing powerhouse into a high-tech industrial and innovation hub, announced the state Industries Minister **TRB Rajaa**.

At the TN Rising Coimbatore event, he stated that the focus is now on advanced sectors like electronics, aerospace, drones, and digital infrastructure.

A total of 158 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) are set to be signed, representing investments worth Rs 43,844 crore, which are expected to create over 100,000 jobs.

"We said Kovai will rise, and #KovaiRising indeed!" Rajaa shared on 'X', emphasising the city's transformation. -PTI

Additionally, the Minister for Information and Digital Services P Thiaga Rajan inaugurated the iTNT Coimbatore Regional Hub, the third centre in Tamil Nadu aimed at diversifying the research ecosystem.*—PTI*

Indian economy to cross $4T in FY26, says CEA

NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

Chief Economic Advisor **V Anantha Nageswaran** on Tuesday said the size of Indian economy is expected to cross USD 4 trillion in current fiscal.

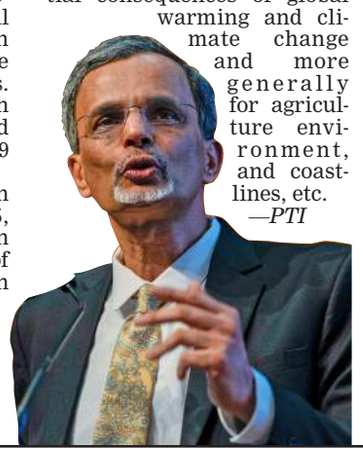
He said with the geopolitics in a "huge state of flux", economic growth is very vital prerequisite to maintain India's standing and leverage in the global scheme of things.

India currently is the fifth largest economy in the world with a GDP of around USD 3.9 trillion.

Speaking at the IVCA Green Returns Summit 2025, Nageswaran said the Indian economy is already sort of crossing the USD 4 trillion mark, in the course of the current financial year, from USD 3.9 trillion at the end of March 2025.

"So, whatever we do with respect to greening the economy, energy transition, environment, dealing with climate change and climate volatility have to be aligned with our priorities, both in the near term and the medium term," he said.

Nageswaran said the country is well aware of the potential consequences of global warming and climate change and more generally for agriculture environment, and coastlines, etc. *—PTI*



'TO CONNECT WITH CUSTOMERS'

Apple lays off workers in sales team

CALIFORNIA, 25 NOV

Apple has unexpectedly dismissed dozens of employees from its global sales division this month, despite entering into one of its strongest quarters in years, said sources.

According to Bloomberg, sources familiar with the matter said that the job cuts, which span multiple sales teams including account managers who handle large-enterprise, education and government clients as well as staff involved in Apple's private briefing centres, were informed of it over the past couple of weeks.

In its official statement, Apple described the restructuring as a move to "connect with even more customers," adding that it continues to hire and encouraged impacted staff to apply for new roles within the company.

However, some employees view the changes as part of a strategic shift to accelerate sales through 'the channel', which is the third-party resellers and reduce internal headcount in the sales organisation, the source said.

Around 20 roles were reportedly removed earlier in new cuts in Australia and New Zealand, and in the latest layoff, even long-tenured staff have been affected, it said.

Employees whose positions have been fired can apply for another role within Apple by 20 January; if unsuccessful, they will receive severance, it added.

While the scale of these layoffs is lesser compared with other tech giants' layoffs, the move is notable because Apple rarely undertakes broad workforce cuts, making this one of its more significant internal reorganisations in recent years, the source said. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: PTI

Winning start for Nagal at AO wild card play-off

CHENGDU, 25 NOV

India's top singles player, Sumit Nagal, advanced to the quarter-finals of the Australian Open Asia-Pacific Wildcard Play-off after recovering from a first-set lapse against China's Minghui Zhang here on Tuesday.Nagal, seeded sixth, recovered from a slow start, having lost the opening set, to dominate the next two and secure a 2-6, 6-0, 6-2 win.The Chengdu event, which runs from November 24–29 at the Sichuan International Tennis Centre, offers the men's and women's singles winners wild card entry into the main draw of the 2026 Australian Open.The Indian's path had been clouded earlier by visa uncertainty; his initial application to enter China was rejected, prompting Nagal to publicly appeal to Chinese officials.The issue was later resolved, and he was cleared to travel.Nagal now awaits the winner of the match between Bu Yunchaokete and Zijiang Yang

India will put its best foot forward at Squash WC: Joshna

CHENNAI, 25 NOV

India will put its best foot forward at the 2025 Squash World Cup a mixed team event to improve its bronze medal-winning performance in the last edition, 19-time National singles champion Joshna Chinappa said on Tuesday. The Indian team, seeded second, comprises Abhay Singh, Velavan Senthilkumar, Anahat Singh and Joshna, with the tournament scheduled between 9 to 14 December at the Express Avenue Mall and Indian Squash Academy (ISA) courts. "At the back of my mind, of course, the World Cup is there, so you want to play well, you want to bring your best game forward. We have a wonderful team with Abhay, Velavan and Anahat, who are probably playing some of the best squash of their lives," Joshna said.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

BCCI announces Asian Paints as 'Colour Partner'

MUMBAI, 25 NOV

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced a three-year partnership with Asian Paints as its 'Colour Partner' on Tuesday. The association adds to the BCCI's existing cohort of commercial partners including SBI Life, Campa and Atomberg and will be for more than 110 men's, women's and domestic matches played across the country. Having reported a consolidated turnover of Rs 33,797 crore, Asian Paints aims to further strengthen its long-standing ties with cricket with this deal. reportedly valued at Rs 45 crore.—*PTI*

Vedant guides India B to two-wicket win over Afghanistan

BENGALURU, 25 NOV

Vedant Trivedi anchored a tricky chase with a 102-ball 83 as a much-improved India B prevailed over Afghanistan by two wickets in the U-19 Tri-Series here on Tuesday. This was India B's first win of the tournament after having lost their previous three matches against Afghanistan and India A, the third team in the competition. Besides Trivedi, India B skipper George (42), BK Kishore (29 not out), and Deepesh (20 not out) were the other significant contributors for India B, who completed the chase with 11 balls to spare. Left-arm spinner BK Kishore was the most successful bowler for India B, returning impressive figures of 3/19.—*PTI*

India to be formally awarded CWG 2030 hosting rights

PHOTO: PTI

NEW DELHI, 25 NOV

All but assured of the hosting rights more than a month back, India's 2030 Common wealth Games bid is set to be formally approved on Tuesday at the Common wealth Sport's general assembly in Glasgow, marking a major milestone in the country's ambitious plan to become a global multi-sport hub. India last hosted the Games in 2010 in Delhi, but this time, the multi-sport event would be coming to Ahmedabad, a city that has upgraded its sports infrastructure on a war footing in the last decade.

Wednesday's General Assembly will go through the formality of putting a seal of approval on what has already been recommended by the Commonwealth Sport's Board. That recommendation followed a process overseen by the Commonwealth Sport's Evaluation Committee. But Commonwealth Sport decided to instead consider the African nation for the 2034 edition after developing "a strategy for supporting and accelerating" its hosting ambitions. "During the Assembly, members from across the Commonwealth will take the final decision regarding the host of the Centenary Commonwealth Games in 2030, following a presentation from India, outlining their vision for the Games in Amdavad (also known as Ahmedabad). The confirmation of the recommendation will be followed by a unique broadcast moment, stated a press note from Commonwealth Sport that gave a lowdown of how the day would pan out in the Scottish capital.

A formal announcement is expected around 6.30 pm (IST) and India is being represented by joint secretary (sports) Kunal, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President P T Usha and Gujarat Sports Minister Harsh Sanghavi among others."The decision will mark a pivotal moment for the future of the Commonwealth Sport Movement, and a significant chapter in its 100-year history, " the Commonwealth Sport added. —*PTI*

SA tightens grip to subdue India's hopes of a win

South Africa declared their second innings at 260 for 5

GUWAHATI, 25 NOV

India stared down the barrel as a ruthless South Africa slowly tortured the home side by posting an improbable victory target of 549 that has all but ensured the visitors' first series triumph here in 25 years at the end of the fourth day of the second Test.

After South Africa declared their second innings at 260 for 5, India were reeling at 27 for 2 at stumps on Tuesday, having lost openers Yashasvi Jaiswal (13) to Marco Jansen and KL Rahul (6) to Simon Harmer respectively.

Sai Sudharsan (2 batting) and night-watchman Kuldeep Yadav (4 batting) were at the crease. Still, it will take a herculean effort from the remaining batters to save the game on the final day and avoid the ignominy of a 0-2 whitewash.

Head coach Gautam Gambhir will certainly prefer a 0-1 series defeat over a 0-2 result, which would be the second series debacle at home against a SENA nation in the past 12 months.

On the fourth day, the reigning World Test Champions had two targets. First was to set a target that would be virtually out of reach.

Secondly, the more time Proteas spent batting on the fourth day, the stronger the chances of the red soil track crumbling on the fifth day.

Tristan Stubbs (94 off 180 balls), who missed out on a half-century in the first innings by a solitary run, this time fell short of a Test ton by only six runs.

Once Stubbs became Ravindra Jadeja's (4/62 in 28.3 overs) fourth victim, skipper Temba Bavuma declared the second innings, having knocked the stuffing out of the Indian team by making them bowl for 78.3 overs.

Tristan Stubbs PHOTO: PTI

Ravindra Jadeja and Washington Sundar PHOTO: PTI

Bavuma, an experienced captain, looked tactically superior compared to India's stand-in skipper Pant, who looked bereft of ideas in his debut in the leadership role, albeit in a one-off game.

Wanted to bat India completely out of the game: South Africa coach Conrad

As confirmed by Shukri Conrad, the visiting coach, the central reason why South Africa held back the declaration call was due to a quirk of nature – a narrow strip of sunlight that cuts across the Guwahati pitch, almost horizontally, in the final hour of play.Murmurs of discontent had sprung up everywhere on social media platforms, on the stands, and even in the press box as South Africa prolonged its second batting essay in the Guwahati Test against India on Tuesday.

Tristan Stubbs was the lead enforcer of South Africa's watchful vigil. By Lunch, the No. 3 batter had blocked his way to 60, at a ponderous strike rate of 38.7.

This series defeat won't affect us: Jadeja

Battle-hardened all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja said on Tuesday that the looming series defeat to South Africa will have no bearing on India's next Test assignment in Sri Lanka in August next year, stressing that forcing a draw in the second Test would be akin to a "win" for the young side. India is all set to lose the two-Test series against South Africa as it would be impossible to chase down a target of 549 on the final day.

India 201 and 27 for 2 (Jaiswal 13, Harmer 1-1) need another 522 runs to beat South Africa 489 and 260 for 5 dec (Stubbs 94, Jadeja 4-64) —*PTI*

AZLAN SHAH CUP HOCKEY

PHOTO: PTI

India fought bravely, but lost 2-3 to Belgium

IPOH, 25 NOV

A determined India fought bravely but lost to Belgium 2-3 in a rain-affected Sultan Azlan Shah Cup hockey match, here on Tuesday.

Abhishek (33rd) and Shilanand Lakra (57th) got themselves on the scoresheet for India, while Roman Duvekot (17th, 57th) and Nicolas De Kerpel (45th) were on target for Belgium.

The defeat comes after India, led by defender Sanjay, won the opening game in the six-team event against three-time champions South Korea 1-0 on Sunday.A determined India weathered the early pressure with Pawan doing a good job in the cage. Belgium had their first real opportunity from a penalty corner 10 minutes into the contest, and soon followed it up with another. But the Indian defence stood firm to ensure they stayed level at the end of the first quarter.

Belgium took the lead against the run of play, breaking Pawan's resistance courtesy of a goal from Roman Duvekot in the 17th minute.

India came out firing on all cylinders in the second half and earned the breakthrough when Abhishek (33rd) finished off a superb move to restore parity.

Belgium wrested back the lead with Nicolas De Kerpel (45th) converting a penalty corner.They soon extended their advantage with Roman Duvekot (46th) scoring early in the fourth quarter, giving Belgium some more breathing room. With time ticking away, Shilanand Lakra (57th) found the back of the net after a brilliant cross from Rabichandra Singh, giving India a glimmer of hope. With 90 seconds to go, Mohit HS made a sensational stop to deny Belgium a fourth goal to keep India in the hunt. However, the equaliser eluded them.

India will next play Malaysia on Wednesday. —*PTI*

India, Pak in same group; Rohit named brand ambassador of 2026 T20 WC

HYDERABAD, 25 NOV

India international Rohit Sharma was named as the ICC Brand Ambassador for the T20 World Cup 2026, set to take place in India and Sri Lanka. ICC chairman Jay Shah announced the T20 World Cup schedule announcement event in Kolkata on Tuesday. Rohit had led India to the T20 World Cup title win in 2024 before retiring from the format. The 38-year-old is currently active only in the ODI format as he hopes to add the ODI World Cup to his honours list in 2027. The tournament is set to be played from 7 February to 8 March

20 Teams, 4 Groups, Super Eight Stage

Most of the tournament's format is already confirmed. The 20 teams are split into four groups of five, followed by a Super Eight stage, semi-finals, and the final. Alongside cricket heavyweights India, Pakistan, Australia, England, South Africa, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, West Indies, and Bangladesh, emerging sides such as Nepal, Oman, UAE, and Italy will also compete. India is reportedly placed in a group with Pakistan, the USA, Namibia, and the Netherlands, while Sri Lanka faces Australia, Zimbabwe, Ireland, and Oman in a potential "group of death." Only two teams from each group will progress to the Super Eight stage. —*PTI*

SMAT 2025

Hardik comeback on cards, chance for domestic talent to shine

HYDERABAD, 25 NOV

Hardik Pandya will be expected to make his much-awaited comeback from injury, while the promising domestic talent will be looking for impactful performances ahead of the IPL auction when the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy (SMAT) begins across four venues from Wednesday.

Hardik has not played competitive cricket since suffering a quadricep injury during the Asia Cup in September.

Ahead of the T20 World Cup at home in February-March, Hardik would only play the shortest format, and SMAT will be a platform where he can prove his fitness before the T20 series against South Africa beginning 9 December.

The tournament will be played in Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Kolkata and Lucknow. The Shardul Thakur-led Mumbai will enter the tournament as defending champions.

Starting from Wednesday, Baroda have seven group games to play till December 8, and head coach Mukund Parmar is expecting the star India all-rounder to play the majority of them. "He has not yet joined the squad, but we expect him to play the majority of the games. —*PTI*

JUNIOR WORLD CUP

CM Siddaramaiah unveils the Trophy of Hockey for Men in Bengaluru on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

KSCA REJECTS KUMAR'S NOMINATION FOR PRESIDENT, APPROVES PRASAD'S BID

BENGALURU, 25 NOV

The nomination of K.N. Shanth Kumar, who is contesting for the post of president of the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA), has been rejected in the scrutiny round on Tuesday.

Shanth, the Director of The Printers (Mysore) Pvt. Limited is part of 'Team Brijesh', backed by former India cricketer and administrator Brijesh Patel.

The nomination of former India cricketer Venkatesh Prasad, who leads 'Team Game Changers', for the president post has been approved. The candidature of former India women's team cricketer Kalpana Venkatachar, a member of Prasad's unit, for president has also been approved.

'Team Game Changers' suffered a setback as former KSCA Treasurer Vinay Mruthyunjaya's nomination for the post of Secretary has been rejected on technical grounds.

Former KSCA Treasurer E.S. Jairam and former KSCA Secretary Santosh Menon (both part of 'Team Brijesh'), and former India batter Sujith Somasundar ('Team Game Changers') have been deemed eligible to contest for the key post of Secretary.

A notice signed by the KSCA Electoral Officer mentions that the list of candidates was scrutinised in the presence of Hon'ble Justice Subhash Adi and the candidates. —*PTI*

DESPITE GUEYE'S RED CARD

10-man Everton beats Man United 1-0

MANCHESTER, 25 NOV

Everton beat Manchester United 1-0 on Monday night to slow the home team's recent revival in a Premier League game that will be remembered for an early red card shown to Everton's Idrissa Gueye for striking teammate Michael Keane.

Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall scored with a superb strike in the 29th minute, after which Everton was forced to defend its lead. United dominated the visiting 10 men in a one-sided second half but couldn't find a way past England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford. "They were the better team, with 11 players or 10," United coach Ruben Amorim said. "I felt from the first minute that we were not there with the same intensity, so they deserve the win. If they have 10, let's push the opponent to the final third. We need to be near the transition. We needed to be focused. We need to do more." It was United's first defeat since losing 3-1 at Brentford almost two months ago and the first time in 47 Premier League games that a visiting team has won at Old Trafford with 10 men. However, the night's unforgettable talking point came after 13 minutes. Gueye was furious at what appeared to be Keane's failure to pick up his pass inside the Everton penalty box. Bruno Fernandes stepped in and fired wide, but an angry Gueye confronted Keane. "The referee's call of red card to Gueye for violent conduct was checked and confirmed by VAR with the action deemed to be a clear strike to the face of Keane," the league said in a social media post. The Senegalese was the first player to be sent off in the Premier League for fighting with a teammate since Stoke City's Ricardo Fuller saw red after clashing with Andy Griffin in 2008. —*PTI*

Kiernan Dewsbury PHOTO: X/@ EVERTON

Gayatri-Treesa enters 2nd round of Syed Modi Int'l

LUCKNOW, 25 NOV

India's women's doubles pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand progressed to the second round of the USD 240,000 Syed Modi International Super 300 tournament here on Tuesday.

The defending champions overcame Malaysia's Cheng Su Hui and Tan Zhing Yi 19-21, 22-20, 21-9 in a hard-fought opener.It was a promising outing for the Indian duo, especially with Gayatri returning to competitive action last week at the Australian Open after a five-month layoff due to a shoulder injury.

Priya Konjengbam and Shruti Mishra also entered the second round, defeating compatriots Peeva Evangelin and Samriddhi Singh 21-8, 21-11 in a one-sided contest.

In men's doubles, fifth seeds Hariharan Amsakarunan and M.R. Arjun winners at the Al Ain Masters Super 100, Turkiye International Challenge, and Telangana Challenge posted a 21-11, 21-13 victory over Ayush Makhija and Sujey Tamboli to advance to the second round. —*PTI*